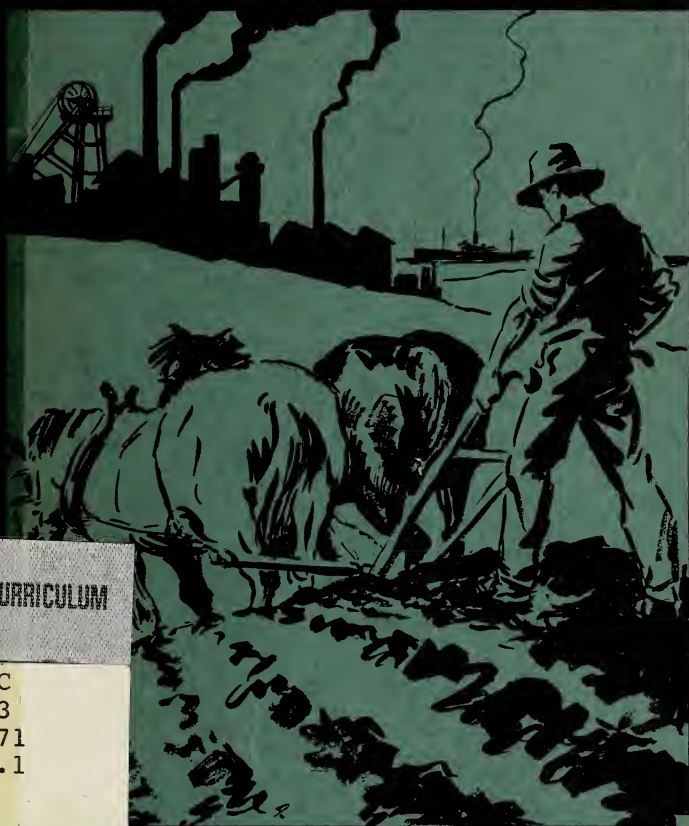


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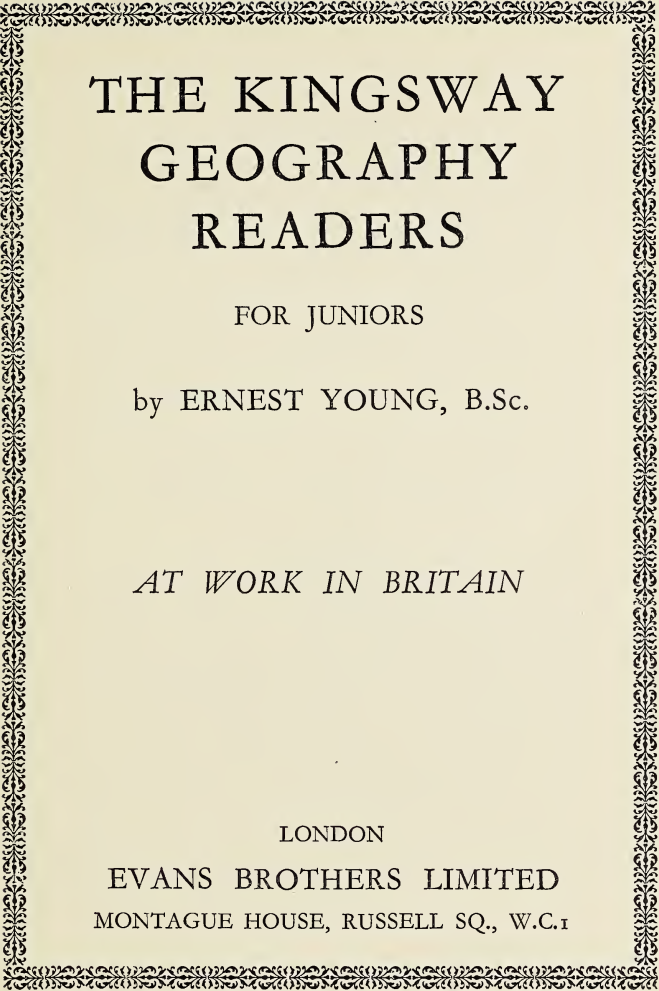
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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

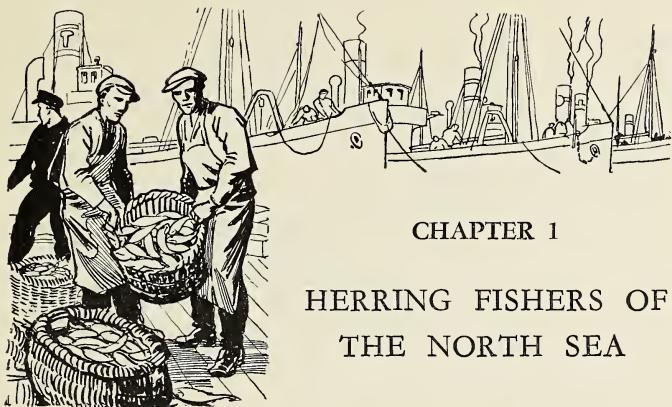
THE British Isles are full of interesting people, things, and places. Some parts of the country are high, some low ; some grow wheat, others grow oats ; here the land is given up chiefly to sheep, there to cattle. There are green fields, bare hills and smoky towns. There are rivers that laugh and babble as they tumble down the hillside, others that crawl so slowly to the sea. The people do not all dress alike, speak alike or eat the same kinds of food. In fact there are so many things to talk about that this little book can hold but a few of them.

The most important people are those who provide us with food, for without food we should all die in a very short time. So we will begin our stories of how people live in the British Isles with the lives of those who feed us. We take first some of the fishermen who neither plough nor sow, but who gather their harvest from the water. To see them at work we go to the North Sea, where herrings, one of the cheapest and best of foods, are caught in millions.

ERNEST YOUNG.



THE BRITISH ISLES



CHAPTER 1

HERRING FISHERS OF THE NORTH SEA

AT almost every little port and harbour on the east shores of England and Scotland you may see, in the day-time, small groups of men, with faces tanned by years of wind and rain. They stand or sit outside rough wooden huts whose walls and roofs have been covered with tar to keep out the wet. They are talking or mending their nets and sails. When, however, evening draws near, many of them will take to their boats and seek for fish in the waters of the ocean.

Some of the boats are small sailing vessels : others are larger and driven by steam. Some of them drag a big net, shaped like a bag, along the floor of the sea and catch the fish that live on the bottom.

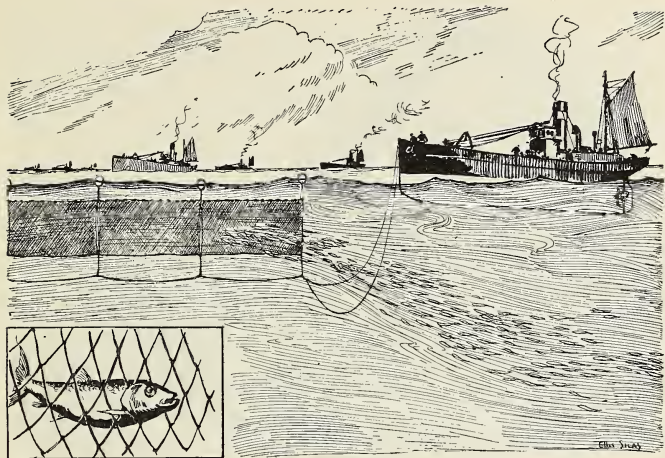
But the herrings swim near the surface of the water and are caught in nets that are drawn along, not far below the surface, by boats called *drifters*.

The way the nets hang in the water is shown in the diagram opposite. At the top are a number of floats: these are bladders and look like a lot of coloured footballs. To the floats are fastened a number of *strops*. If the herrings are swimming quite near the surface, the strops may be only six feet long; if they are farther down, the strops may be as many as ten feet long.

To the strops is fastened another rope which carries about eighty big corks. Below this hangs the net. It is something like a big tennis net, with meshes about one inch square. The lower end of the net is from six to fifteen yards below the upper edge, and to it are fastened a number of heavy weights.

A drifter carries from seventy to eighty nets, but always lets down an odd number, because the sailors think that even numbers are unlucky. These nets are fastened together, end to end, and the full length of netting to one drifter may be as much as three miles.

On a busy night in October or November, when as many as 1000 fishing-craft may have set out



A FLEET OF DRIFTERS CATCHING HERRING : INSET, DIAGRAM SHOWING HOW THE HERRING IS CAUGHT BY THE GILLS IN THE NET

from the harbours of Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the nets of all the drifters, if put in one straight line, would stretch from England to America, right across the Atlantic Ocean.

The nets are thrown out, soon after sunset, by hand. This is a back-aching business for two or more miles of heavy nets and ropes have to be lifted over the side of the boat. When the nets have been lowered the boat is allowed to drift. If the fishermen are lucky, the herrings swim against the net, put their heads through the meshes and are



Photo]

HAULING IN THE NETS—

[H. Jenkins, Lowestoft

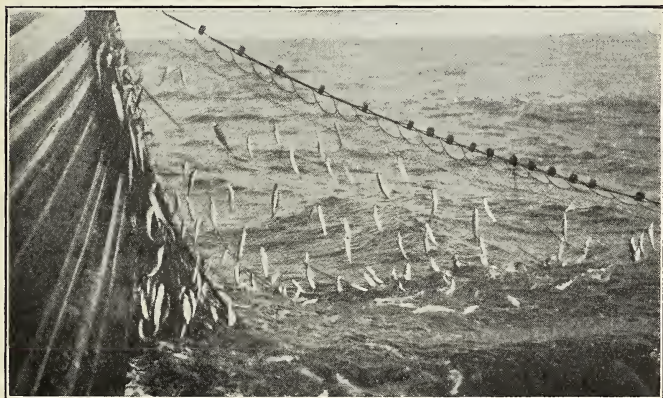
caught, by the gills, in huge numbers. As many as sixty millions have been landed at one place in one day.

While the boat is drifting the men are not idle. They trim their lamps, place planks on the deck to hold the fish when they are shaken out of the net, and wash out the hold. Most of them are able to go down to the cabin and get a few hours' sleep in the bunk, but somebody has always to be on watch to see that the boat does not bump into another one during the night.

In the dark hours of the early morning the men

begin to haul in the nets to see what luck the night has brought them. If the sea is rough the boat pitches and rolls and it is hard for them to keep their feet. If it is cold their fingers may be almost frozen. The waves break over the sides and drench the decks with spray.

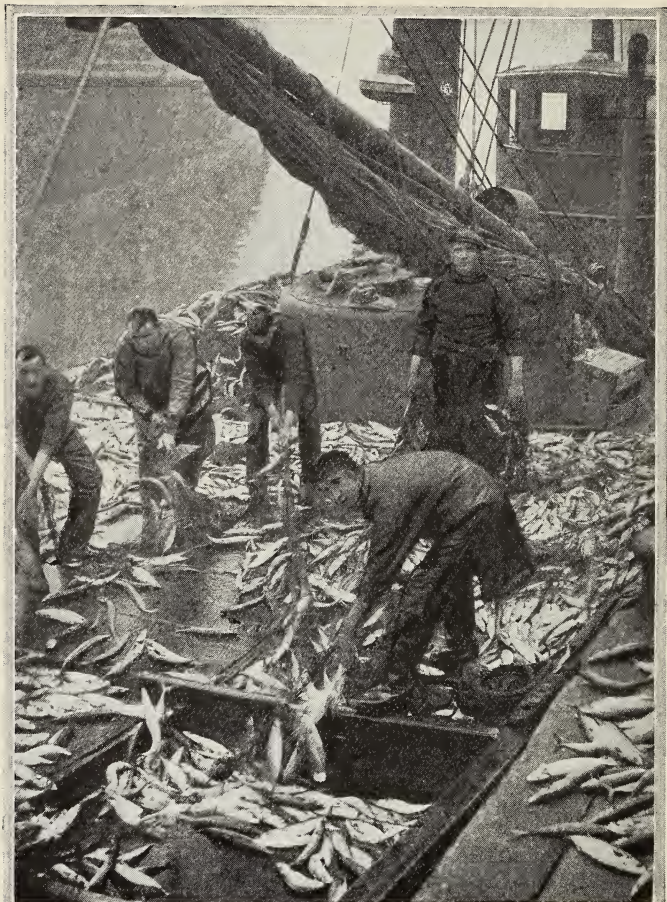
In order to keep as warm and dry as possible they then wear thick jumpers, long rubber boots that reach to their thighs, oil-skin overalls and sou'-wester hats. When they have been at work but a short time they look as if they were covered, from head to foot, in shining armour, for the scales of the herring are loose and fly all over the place.



Photo]

[H. Jenkins, Lowestoft

— FILLED WITH FISH



Photo]

[H. Jenkins, Lowestoft

CLEARING THE NETS OF HERRING ON BOARD A LOWESTOFT DRIFTER

The crew haul in the laden net, foot by foot, shake the herrings on to the deck or shoot them into the hold with wooden scoops. If the catch is a good one they may work for twelve hours on end. As soon as all the fish are aboard the drifter swiftly makes for port, where the fish are swung ashore in baskets and sent to market.

In a few hours the men are off to sea again. Fishermen work much longer than the men who earn their living in factories, and they cannot begin and leave off at fixed hours. They must go when the fish call, and the fish do not always call at the same time. And they must go with brave hearts to face fog, storm, and possible shipwreck in order that for a few pence we may have a meal of herrings.

EXERCISES

1. Take a blank map of the British Isles. In the North Sea (see map on page 6) print the word HERRINGS. Keep the map, and when you have learned where anything is grown, found or made, print the name of that thing in the right place in the map.

2. Collect pictures, advertisements, etc. and paste them in a book to illustrate these lessons.

CHAPTER 2

SCOTTISH HERRING-LASSES AND FISHER-GIRLS

THE herrings come from the sea to the shore in straight lines, but not to all points of the shore at the same time. Those that lay their eggs off the Shetland Isles arrive in May. In June there are herrings in the Moray Firth, in August off the north-east coast of England, and in September and October off Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

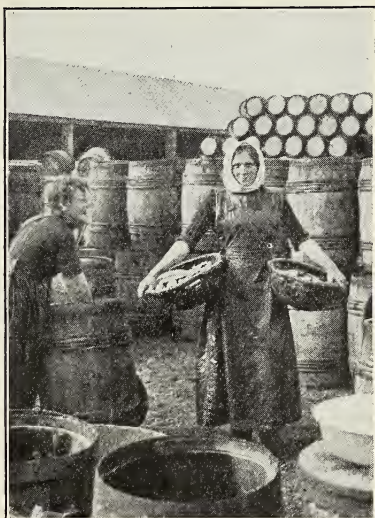
So many herrings are caught that they cannot all be eaten at once, so they are dried and salted to make them keep. The work of cleaning, curing and packing the fish is mostly done by girls from all parts of Scotland, even from the Hebrides, who are known as the Scottish herring-lasses. They are said to follow the fish from north to south, but what they really do is to follow the boats and meet the fish. Month by month, they go from port to port down the coast from Wick to Lowestoft, stopping wherever the drifters are putting in.

Though known as "lasses," many of them are fifty or sixty years of age, and have been herring-lasses all their lives. They wear coverings over their heads, and, because they work amidst pools of

dirty water and slimy fish-scales, they have rubber aprons and stout rubber boots.

They work in groups of three. Each lass has a wooden barrel behind her and several tubs in front of her. As soon as the fish have been washed the lasses slit them open with a sharp knife, take out the insides, and fling the parts that are not wanted into the barrels at the back of them. They throw the cleaned herrings into tubs, the biggest in one tub, smaller ones in another tub and so on.

As they put the herrings in the tubs they cover them with rock salt. This salt makes their hands so red and sore that they work with their fingers bound up. All the time they laugh and talk, but they are so quick and clever that they can fill three barrels in an hour.



Photo]

[Horace W. Nicholls

SCOTTISH HERRING-LASSES

*Photo]**[H. Jenkins, Lowestoft*

SCOTTISH LASSES PACKING FISH : NOTE THEIR RUBBER APRONS AND
BOOTS

In some ports, however, a machine is now in use that can clean and gut five herrings by the time a herring-lass can finish one.

If the herrings are to be smoked they are taken out of the salting barrels after five days and threaded on long wooden rods. Twenty to thirty herrings hang from each rod until they are drained, when they are put on racks in a smoking-kiln. On the stone floor below them, wood-fires are lighted and kept burning day and night. The wood in these



Photo]

[Sport and General

SCOTTISH FISHER-GIRLS AT WORK ON THE QUAYSIDE AT YARMOUTH

fires is generally of oak and ash shavings, but sometimes peat is used. The fish hang in the smoke, which rises and finds its way out through the cracks that are left in the roof. In fourteen hours the herrings become bloaters; in fourteen days, they are red herrings. If they are cut open and dried, they are kippers.

When the curing is finished, the fish are packed in barrels to be sent to other lands, or in small boxes to be sent to the markets of Britain.

The Scottish fisher-girls, as they are called, also get their living by handling fish. Unlike the her-

ring-lasses, they are all young and usually pretty. They work all the year round in sheds, and they, too, wear rubber aprons and tall rubber boots.

In one of these sheds, at a long wooden table, there may be thirty girls cutting whiting into fillets. They slice away so rapidly with their sharp knives that it makes one giddy to watch them. Other girls are chopping the heads off haddocks and passing them on to be plunged in tubs where brushes, worked by machinery, scrape away the black skin. After that the haddocks, like herrings, are pickled in salt, threaded on rods, drained, and smoked.

It does not seem a very pleasant job to stand about in puddles on stone floors, from eight in the morning till six at night, cleaning, slicing and cutting the heads off fish. But the herring-lasses and the fisher-girls love the life and would not change it for any other.

EXERCISE

Take another blank map of the British Isles. On it print all the place-names in this chapter and in Chapter I. Add to it, from time to time, all the place-names you meet with in this book.

CHAPTER 3

SHEEP FARMERS OF THE FELS

IN the north-west of England is the Lake District, where long, narrow lakes lie snugly amongst the steep, bare slopes of mountains of granite and slate. There is a great deal of rain, and the air is filled with the noise of falling streams as they go "thumping and flumping and bumping and jumping, dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing" down the mountain sides.

This is not a fertile land, and it is only in the valleys that there are any ploughed fields: there are few cattle, but there are a great many sheep that find a living on the high moors or *fells*.

There are about thirty different kinds of fell sheep, but they are all small and hardy. The best known are the Herdwick. In most places they may wander where they please amongst the mountains, but here and there the farmers have set up fences



Photo] [G. P. Abraham, Keswick

A LAKELAND SHEPHERD

to keep them at home. These fences are made of strong wire fastened to iron posts that are fixed in the solid rock, but so fierce are the winter winds that the posts are sometimes torn out and the wire laid in tangled heaps upon the ground.

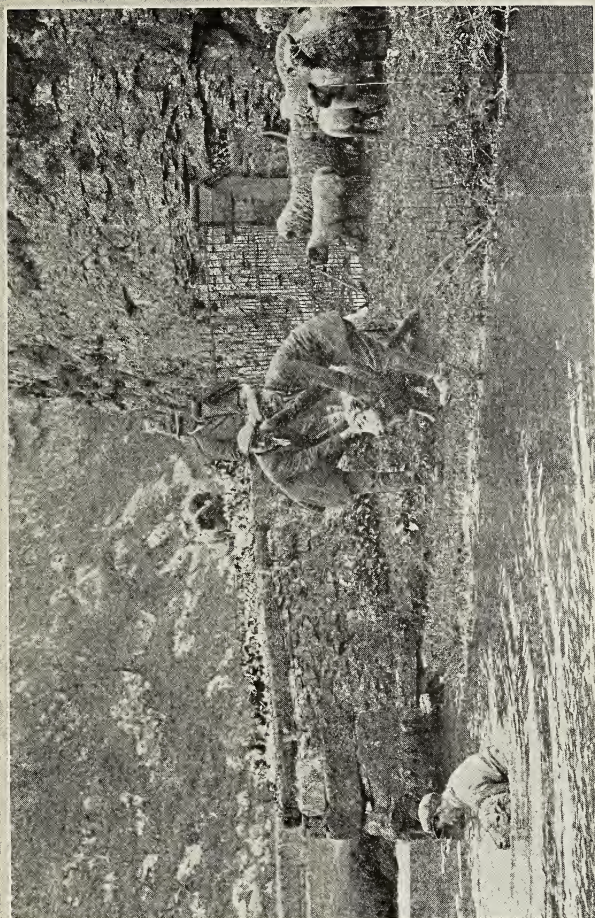
In places where there are no fences the sheep do not, as a rule, wander very far from home. They know their own fells and stick to them. If they are taken to another part of the mountains they may die or, very often, slowly find their way back again. Hence they cannot be sold except with the farm. When a man rents a farm he rents the sheep with it.

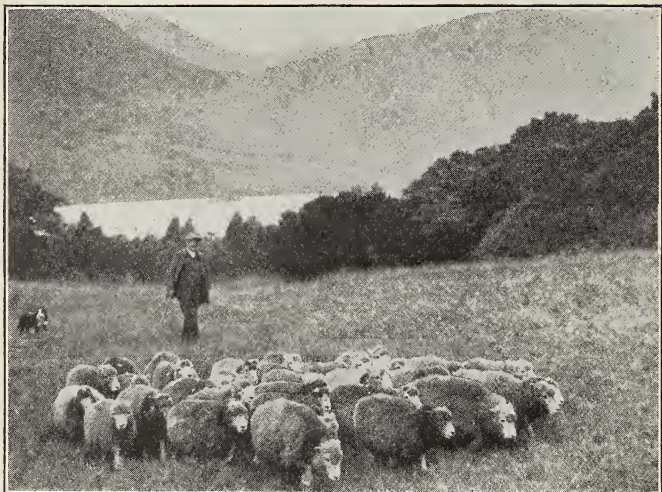
Some sheep, however, do sometimes wander off and get mixed up with other flocks, but they are never really lost. Each sheep-farm has a mark for its own sheep, made by dabbing colour on the wool or cutting little bits out of the ears. All these marks are printed in a big book called *The Shepherd's Guide*, and by looking in the book one can tell to which farm a stray sheep belongs.

At certain times the stray sheep are brought together at one place and put in a fold. This is called a Shepherd's Meet. The farmers from the country near at hand gather together, pick out their own animals and then drive them home.

WASHING THE SHEEP BEFORE THEY ARE SHEARED

Photo]





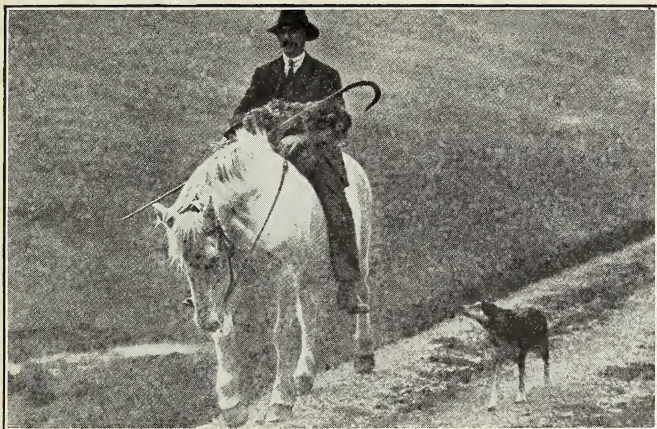
Photo]

[G. P. Abraham, Keswick

GATHERING IN THE FELL SHEEP

The shepherd has a pleasant life in summer when he wanders over the hillsides with his thin, short-haired dog. But in the late winter and early spring, when the lambs are born, he is often very busy and tired. He spends the night in a small hut near the sheep-fold and sleeps in his clothes, ready, at the slightest sound, to go out, lantern in hand, to see what is the matter.

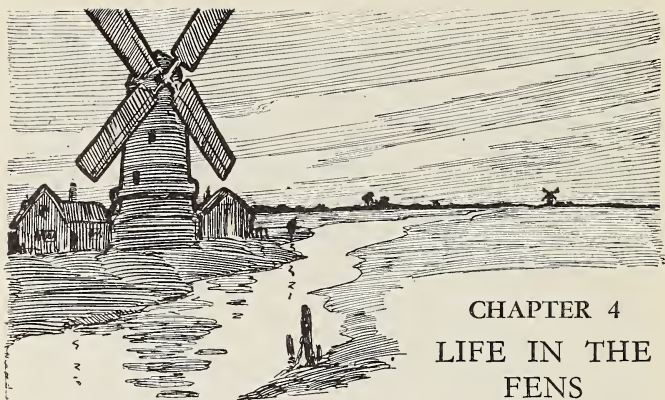
His great friend and helper is his dog. The shepherds are fond of their dogs, and every year

*Photo]**[G. P. Abraham, Keswick*

A LAKELAND SHEPHERD AND HIS DOG

there are dog trials with prizes for the best. At these trials the dog has to drive three sheep into a pen. The shepherd has to stay more or less in one place and tell the dog, who may be half a mile away, what to do. He can whistle, call or wave, but he cannot go with the dog. Sometimes the dog does not obey the signal, but acts as he thinks fit. As a rule it is the dog who is right, and you may hear one of the people who is watching the trials say, "Ah! the dog is better than his master!"

The sheep-farmer has his troubles like everybody else. His chief foes are floods, snowstorms and foxes.



CHAPTER 4 LIFE IN THE FENS

IN the east of England, round about the Wash, is a low-lying district called the Fens : some parts of it are so low that they are below the level of the sea. When you go down into it you are in a land much of which is as flat as a table. Once upon a time it was covered with swamps and marshes and the only dry pieces were small patches, called "islands," that rose perhaps twenty to a hundred feet above the wet ground that lay around them.

There is, however, now very little marsh left. It has been drained and dried and, as the land is fertile, the Fens are now the home of farmers whose fields are rich with wheat, potatoes, beet and flowers.

The people who first drained the fenland did not

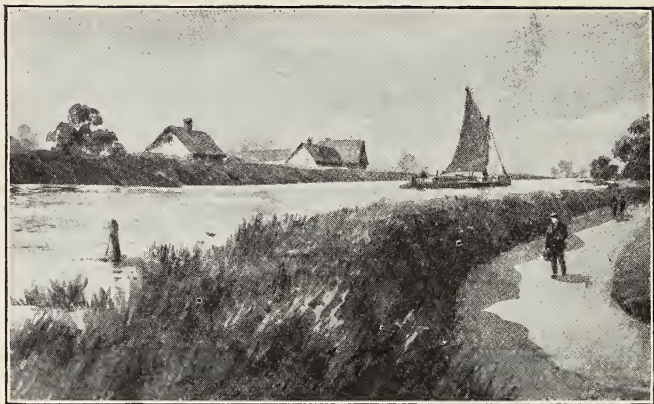
live in it. It was bad enough for them to have their crops ruined now and then by floods: they were not going to run the risk of losing their houses as well. Hence the villages are on the *edge* of the fen or on the islands. The farms are down in the fen, but the farmhouse is in the village. This means that at harvest-time wheat may have to be carted two miles or more before it is stacked. And in the following spring the farmer will have to cart the straw, in the form of manure, all the way back again. This is one of the fen farmer's troubles.



Photo]

[Alfred S. Gyde

A FIELD OF FLOWERS IN THE FEN DISTRICT



A RIVER, HIGHER THAN THE ROAD, KEPT FROM OVERFLOWING BY HIGH BANKS ON EITHER SIDE

Another is to get rid of the rain water. It cannot run into the rivers because the rivers are higher than the fields and are kept from overflowing only by high banks on either side. It is first drained into narrow ditches : from the smaller ditches it runs, very gently, into larger ones called *cuts*, which carry it as far as the river bank. It is next lifted by means of pumps, from the field, over the bank into the river.

In the past these pumps have been worked by horses or windmills. Windmills are cheap, but they work only when the wind blows and are not so

useful as steam engines that need not stop. Some windmills can still be seen, their broad sails turning slowly round when the breeze blows, but every few miles along the rivers there are now steam pumping-stations that are taking their place. Draining the fen by steam costs a great deal of money, and the fenland farmers have to pay a tax of so much an acre to have their lands kept dry.

In olden times, when the people were separated by the swamps, they did not often visit each other. To get anyone to come to see you you had to make it very much worth his while. Every village had, therefore, once a year, a feast or a fair. Though there are now plenty of dry, straight roads along which to travel, the feasts, lasting perhaps a week,



Photo]

[Alfred S. Gyde

SKATING IN THE FEN DISTRICT

are still kept up, and people gather at them from all the country round.

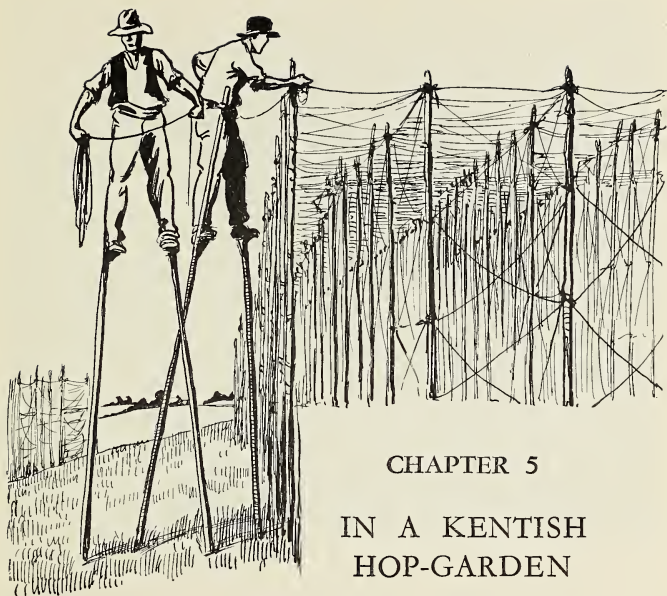
Because the fenland is so flat the fen people make great use of bicycles. They begin to cycle soon after they are able to walk, and they go on till they are seventy or even eighty years of age. There is no free-wheeling down hills, because there are no hills : many fen children have never seen a hill in their lives.

In times of severe frost, when the drains and rivers are frozen, the people take to skates, and may go for seventy miles in and out in a day. This can be done nowhere else in Britain. It is said that you cannot keep a fen man on the land if there is a sheet of ice to bear him on the water. The Fens are the home of England's fastest skaters.

Although the Fens are so flat they have a beauty of their own. Nowhere is so much sky to be seen as over wide, level plains. Clouds of all shapes and sizes speckle its blue in the day-time, while at night the setting sun turns its western rim into sheets of red and gold and orange.

EXERCISE

What is :—a drifter, a herring-lass, a fell, the Shepherd's Guide, the Shepherd's Meet, a fen ? On what page did you find each answer ?



CHAPTER 5

IN A KENTISH HOP-GARDEN

IN the south-east of England, in the county of Kent, are meadows, woods, fields of strawberries, orchards of fruit and wide stretches of hop-gardens. More hops are grown in Kent than in any other part of the British Isles.

A hop garden, in winter, is a bare kind of place, for the plant at this season is simply a stump only a few inches above the ground. The chief things to be seen are poles, 12 to 13 feet high, set about

12 feet apart, in rows. The tops of the poles are joined by wires. Other wires are carried along the rows at a height of 4 feet or less from the ground. From the stump of the hop plant strings are taken to the lower wire and then slanted across to the top wire in the next row.

The hop plant is a climber, and, as it grows, it twines itself round the strings. In summer-time the strings and poles are hidden under a mass of green leaves from which hang bunches of greenish-yellow flowers. The flowers are the part of the plant that is used: they give a bitter flavour to beer.

The hop farmer has plenty of work to do all the year round, but when the harvest-time comes he has more work than he and his men can possibly do by themselves. In order to pick the flowers he needs the help of a large number of people. London alone sends as many as 10,000 "hoppers," as they are called, into Kent every year. Some of them walk all the way, pushing their luggage on old perambulators or on soap-boxes on wheels, and sleep at night by the roadside. Most of them, however, go down on special trains.

If the weather is fine, work begins at seven in the morning. The strings are cut down by the



Photo]

[Courtesy, Messrs. Whitbread

PICKERS AT WORK IN A HOP-FIELD : ON THE FAR LEFT IS THE TALLY-MAN

men, and then the swift fingers of women and children strip off the flowers and put them into baskets.

About mid-day a whistle sounds for dinner and for the coming of the *tally-man*, who finds out how much work has been done. He empties the picked hops into sacks, while another man writes down the number of sacks or *pokes* that are filled. Before

*Photo]*

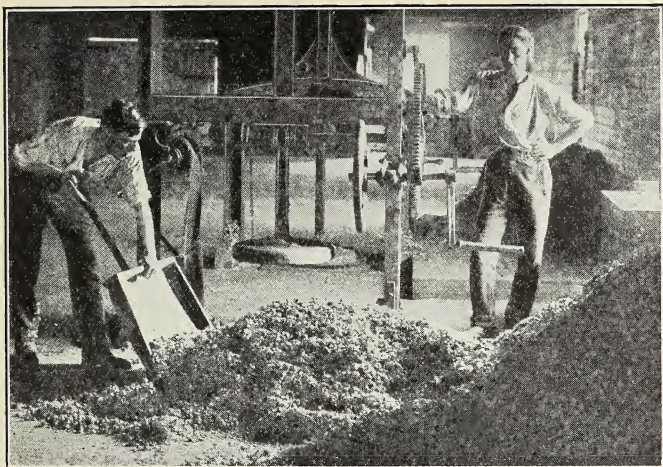
OAST-HOUSES

[Courtesy, Messrs. Whitbread

the hopper begins work he and the farmer agree as to the price to be paid for filling a poke. The larger the hops the smaller the amount paid.

If a stranger passes through a hop garden while the pickers are at work he may suddenly find some one wiping the dust off his boots with a bunch of hops. If this happens he has to pay what is called "shoe money." This money is kept till the end of the harvest, and is then spent in a feast of bread and cheese and ale that is consumed by the hoppers, on the ground.

When the hops have been measured they are taken



Photo]

[Courtesy, Messrs. Whitbread

DRIED HOPS BEING PRESSED INTO "POCKETS"

to a place called an oast-house to be dried. The oast-house is of brick, and has a cowl at the top that swings with the wind. Below the cowl is a floor made of a network of wood over which a hair cloth is laid. On the cloth hops are spread to a depth of several inches. On the floor below is a fire that burns coal or charcoal and sulphur. The sulphur kills the crowds of little insects that live amongst the hops. The hot fumes rise, pass through the cloth and reach the hops. From time to time men turn them over with large light shovels so

that they may all be dried. During a busy season the men in the oast-house may be at work both day and night. The dried hops are pressed as tightly as possible into big, strong bags called *pockets*. These pockets, when filled, each weigh about one and a half hundredweights.

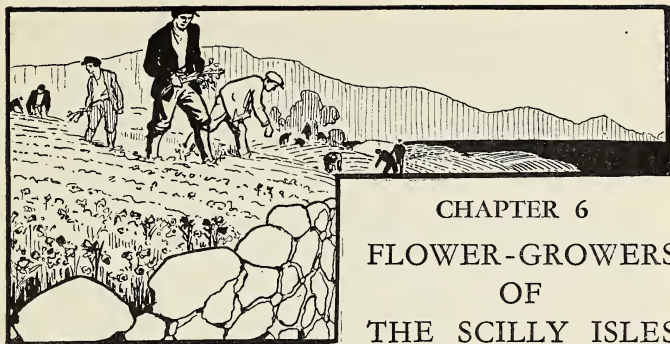
Boys and girls love to gather at the oast-houses at night and roast huge potatoes, which are usually being "lifted" at the season when the hops are picked. Some of them, if they can, will even sleep in the oast-houses at this time.

At about six in the evening the hoppers leave off work and go to the places where they live and sleep. These may be tents or huts. It is not long before camp-fires are lit and the air is full of the smell of cooking. Men with barrows go round selling things to eat, especially kippers.

Many women spend the whole summer in Kent, not simply picking hops, but helping also in the growing and picking of fruit. Their children grow strong and well in the open air. On Sundays they all have a good weekly wash, after which they put on their best clothes and spend the rest of the day resting and chatting to each other.

EXERCISES

See page 45.



CHAPTER 6

FLOWER-GROWERS OF THE SCILLY ISLES

IN the south-west of England, off the coast of Cornwall, is a group of small islands, the Scilly Isles. Here is a land of flowers and storms. Frost and snow are almost unknown and the mild winter is followed by a very early spring. But storms and rain are common, and the houses, built of granite from the rocks, usually have an outside coat of cement to keep out the wet. If, in one of these houses, the cat is seen lying before the fire with its tail turned to the north, it is said to be a sure sign that a storm is coming.

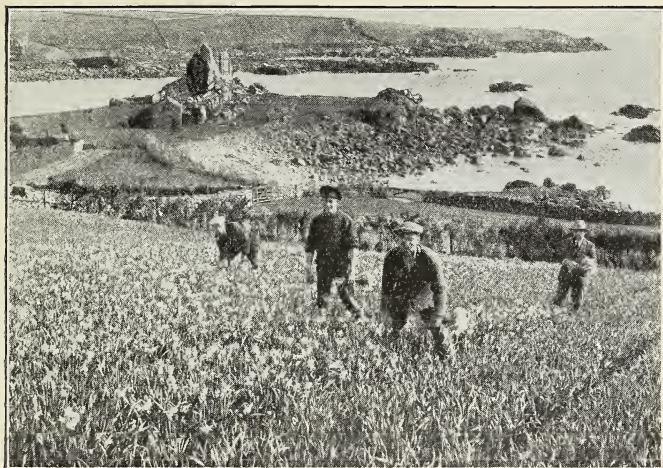
The people of the Scilly Islands get their living by fishing in the deep sea and by catching crabs on the shore, but chiefly by growing early flowers to sell to other parts of the British Isles. The flower fields are square or oblong patches, no two of

which are ever alike. They mostly face to the south or the west, and some of them run right down to the edge of the sea with only a low stone hedge between them and the waves.

In the summer the fields are quite bare. At this season the farmer clears the ground and sets out tens of thousands of bulbs, each from six to nine inches from the other. He also looks after the thick hedges of laurel and other plants that, later on, will shelter the budding crop from the strong winds that do so much damage.

He also rakes up the dry dead leaves from the last crop. At one time these dry leaves were used as bedding for animals, but it was found that the cows had a habit of eating their beds. So now the farmer stacks many of these leaves in ricks by the side of his hay ricks and uses them as food for cattle.

The harvest begins about Christmas, sometimes a little before, and lasts into May or even June, but the busiest time is in February and March, when the land is alive with the white of the narcissus and the lily and the golden trumpets of the daffodils. Children are then given three weeks or a month's holiday from school that they may help in picking and packing the flowers.



Photo]

[Gibson & Sons, Scilly Isles

A FIELD OF FLOWERS BY THE SEA

The picking is done by men and boys, who often wear leggings to keep their legs dry amongst the long, dripping wet leaves.

The flowers are picked when the buds are just about to open to save them from damage that may be done by sudden storms. They are then put in lukewarm water, often in glass-houses, where they open more quickly and much more safely than if left out of doors.

The work of tying them up in bunches of twelve is done by women and girls. It is said that the



Photo]

[Gibson & Sons, Scilly Isles

CHILDREN BUSY IN THE FIELDS

scent of the flowers is so strong that sometimes women have been known to faint in the packing-room. The bundles are put into shallow wooden boxes each of which holds from three to six dozen. The wood for the boxes comes from Sweden, cut into tops, bottoms and sides all ready to be nailed together. One of the commonest sounds, at harvest-time, is the tap, tap, tap of the hammer of the box-maker as he fits the pieces together at all hours of the day. Great care has to be taken in the packing or the flowers will not be fresh when they arrive at the market after their long journey by boat and rail.



Photo]

[Gibson & Sons, Scilly Isles

CARTS, LOADED WITH BOXES OF FLOWERS, WAITING FOR THE BOAT

The flowers are taken away by the Great Western Railway. One of their steamers calls at St. Mary's, the biggest of the islands, three times a week to collect the crop. On these days, from six to half-past nine in the morning, there is one never-ending rattle and rumble of carts, barrows and trucks laden with wooden boxes going down to the boat.

When the flowers reach the land they are put on special fast trains made up of trucks, each of which holds about two and a half tons of flowers. These trains carry from forty to fifty tons at a time. Quite lately, however, some flowers have been sent straight from the Scilly Isles to London by aeroplane.



CHAPTER 7

THE SCOTTISH CROFTER

THE Highlands and islands of the north-west of Scotland form a district where the climate is damp and rather cold and the soil either absent or so thin that it cannot be ploughed. It is a land of rocks, peat and heather. Where there is grass sheep and cattle may be reared, but almost the only grain crop that can be grown is oats. In this poor district live some of the finest, bravest and proudest of all the people in Britain.

The few farms are called *crofts* and the farmers are known as *crofters*. As there are no shops at which to buy things, the crofter has to learn to

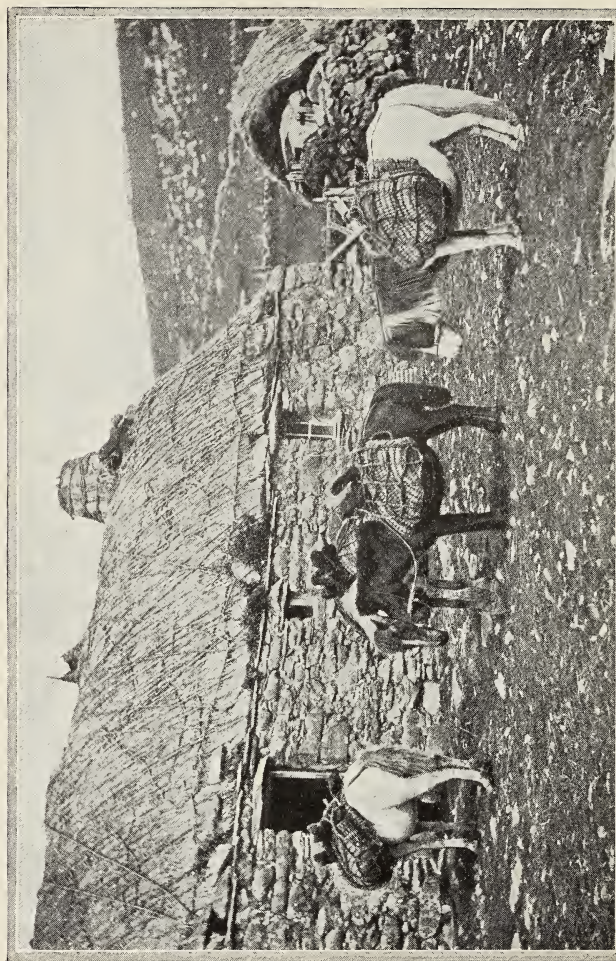
look after himself and make the best of what he can find about him.

His long, low hut is built near a small stream so that he can obtain the water he needs for drinking, cooking and washing: there are no taps. The hut itself has thick walls of stone from the hillside. The thatch of the roof is made of straw from his oats, or of rushes or heather. It is held in place partly by heavy stones tied to the ends of straw or heather ropes. As there are few trees in this bare, rocky land, there is not much wood except in the roof.

The hut contains, as a rule, two rooms, one of which is the kitchen and living-room. In it is a large fireplace and, sometimes, a space for a bed built into the wall. In the side of the fireplace are a number of hooks from which hang the tea-kettle and a big iron pot. The fuel used in the fires is peat, for there is no coal and very little wood.

In some of the cottages cooking may be done on an open fire in the centre of the room.

Near to the house is a small patch of garden and one or two tiny fields, where the crofter grows most of his own food. His chief crops are potatoes and oats. The oats are crushed and eaten as porridge or baked as oatcakes. A cow gives milk and



Photo]

A CROFT IN THE ORKNEY ISLANDS, WITH THE CROFTER'S SHETLAND PONIES

[E.N.A.]

butter and a few fowls provide eggs. Meat is not often seen on the crofter's table: he rears sheep and cattle to sell, not to eat.

The fields are manured with old thatch from the roof, with the heather that has formed a litter for the animals in their stables or stalls and, if the farm is near the seaside, with seaweed.

In the long, dark winter, when it is often not possible to work out of doors, the folk at the croft spin and weave the wool which the farmer cut from his sheep before he sold them. This "home-spun" is rough, but keeps out wind and cold and always has a pleasant smell of peat-smoke in it.

Near the sea the crofter is a fisherman as well as a farmer. In such a case the women may look after the patches of oats and potatoes, while the men, in storm or calm, launch their sturdy boats and seek another harvest in the waters.

Life in the Highlands is very lonely and pleasures are few. You can walk for miles over the hills and moors and never meet a soul. There are few people to speak to, and the only company is that of the family itself when it gathers round the warm, red peat fire in the evening. It is so hard to make a living that the young people now go away to the towns and leave the old folk behind. There



Photo]

[E.N.A.]

CROFTERS PLANTING POTATOES

are little villages where no baby has been born for years.

In some parts there are no school-houses. School is held, for a week, in one of the two rooms of some croft, and then for the next week at another croft and so on. The teacher, a woman, goes from croft to croft. The children may have to travel, every day, from eight to ten miles each way, and if

they have no bicycles they have to walk. If the weather is bad they may spend the night at the croft where the school is being held or with friends. At times they may not be able to go to school at all because the snow is too deep.

Where there are schools each child, in the winter, may be expected to take two or three blocks of peat, each day, for the school fire.

Life in the Highlands is not all gloom. The cottage is set deep among the plumes of the bracken, and the hillside is often golden with gorse, blue with bluebells, or purple with heather. And the farmer is a free man, who has often no master but himself and is happy living as his fathers lived before him.

EXERCISES

1. What is :—a hopper, a crofter? Put the number of the page where you found the answer at the end of it.
2. Would you rather live in the Scilly Islands or in the Highlands of Scotland? Why?
3. Tell what you can see in the picture on page 42 about a crofter's home.

CHAPTER 8

THE IRISH DAIRY-FARMER

IN the south-west corner of Ireland is a valley known as the Golden Vale. It runs from the south of Tipperary to the east of Limerick. Here grass grows better, perhaps, than anywhere else in Europe, and the chief industry is dairy-farming.

Most of the farms are small, and the Irish have learned that it is wiser for a man to sell his milk to a big factory than to make a little butter for himself and then carry it to market. So they join together and build a *creamery*, as it is called, in some place that can be easily reached from a number of farms. To this creamery all the milk of the district goes to be turned into butter and cheese.

Each morning and evening the farmer milks his cows. In the morning a motor lorry or a cart drawn by a horse may come round to pick up the milk, but it is more common to see a dozen or a score of little donkey carts, each holding one big, shiny can, rolling along the quiet country roads.

When the milk arrives at the creamery the manager tests it to see if it is fresh, then to see if it is clean, and last of all to see how much butter-fat it con-

*Photo]**[W. A. Green, Antrim*

A FARMER BRINGING MILK TO THE CREAMERY

tains. What he wants to buy is butter-fat : the rest of the milk is of no use to the creamery. The butter-fat is separated from the rest of the milk by a machine and made into butter. The separated milk is given back to the farmer, who takes it home to feed his family and his pigs. The butter is rolled and squeezed, lifted by big wooden scoops called "Scotch hands," and put into boxes that have been cleaned by steam and are lined with a special kind of paper.

In the old days, when people wanted to meet

*Photo]**[W. A. Green, Antrim*

FARMERS' CANS BEING FILLED WITH SEPARATED MILK

each other for a chat they gathered at the forge of the blacksmith in the village. In these days of motor-cars there are not so many horses wanting new shoes, and the blacksmith now mends punctures in tyres and sells petrol. It is at the creamery, and not at the forge, that the country people hear and tell the news.

The farm-houses are not all alike. Some are fine stone houses ; others are just little cottages with but one or two rooms.



Photo]

[W. A. Green, Antrim

GOING TO MARKET

The common fuel is peat,* which gives out about half the heat of coal. It burns slowly inwards with a red glow until the whole becomes a heap of brown ash. At night the glowing turf is covered with ashes to keep it alight till the morning. There are fires in many an Irish house that have never gone out for years.

The most common meal is of potatoes and milk : small farmers and work people do not often eat any meat except bacon.

Everywhere one sees shawls. In some parts of

* See Chapter IX.

Ireland the wives of the farmers as well as those of the workmen cover their heads with shawls, though many of them have hats and bonnets for Sundays. Sometimes a woman wears two shawls, one over the head and the other over the shoulders. In the west women often wear a petticoat over the head instead of a shawl.

Stranger still, in some parts of the west, boys may wear petticoats.

This is because bad fairies have been known to run away with little boys: they leave the little girls alone. Now if the boy dresses like a girl the fairies do not know he is a boy, and leave him alone too. Of course, when he is old enough to look after himself he can take off his petticoat and wear a pair of trousers.

EXERCISES

1. Where are :—the Golden Vale, the Fens, Moray Firth, the Lake District, Kent?
2. What do the following people like to eat—hoppers, crofters, Irish dairy-farmers? Give the page on which you found the answer.
3. Explain fully what is happening in the picture on page 48.

CHAPTER 9

ON AN IRISH PEAT BOG

IN many parts of Ireland there are lonely places where you can walk for miles and miles and never meet a single person. The land is flat and goes on and on as far as the eye can see. Here there are none of the kinds of fields that one finds in the country districts of England, nor any of the cosy, red-brick houses of the English village. But at one time of the year the plain will be purple with heather, at another, white with the nodding flowers of the bog cotton.

Every few miles there may be a low, white-washed cottage, and now and then a donkey passes drawing a cartload of peat. Here and there are tiny hillocks of peat stacked like a pile of bricks, which tell us why these parts of Ireland are so lonely. They are covered with peat bog. The bog is a kind of marshy land where, for hundreds of years, different kinds of mosses and marsh plants have grown, died and been changed into peat. Three or four inches of new peat are made every year, and in some places the peat is forty or more feet deep.



Photo]

[W. A. Green, Antrim

CUTTING PEAT IN AN IRISH BOG

Some of the bogs are so hard that they can be crossed by roads, or, if there are no roads, safely trodden on foot. Others, however, are soft and deep, and any person who wandered on to them would sink below the surface and be lost.

The peat which is cut out of the bogs is the common fuel in most parts of Ireland. Nearly three-quarters of the Irish people use no other. It is clean to handle, cheap, and plentiful.



Photo]

[W. A. Green, Antrim

A SLIDE CAR LOADED WITH PEAT

As a rule the peat is cut in June and July, when the weather is good and the soil has lost some of its winter wet. Machines have been tried, but the greater part of the cutting is still done by hand, and children as well as men or women are employed.

The few top feet of the bog are springy and wiry and not easy to cut. They are taken off with a bog knife, that has a very broad blade. This top layer is of no use as fuel, but can be used as bedding for animals and even for the making of paper pulp.

The rest of the bog is dug out with a long, narrow, very sharp spade. The first layer, of "white turf," is also not a good fuel, as it burns too quickly. Next comes a layer of "brown turf," which may be six feet thick, and then the "black turf," which is the best of all. It is dark like coal, but soft like cheese.

Hour after hour the cutter chops off pieces of peat each about the size and shape of a brick. These he swings up with his spade to a man who packs them usually on a kind of sledge. The sledge is about the size of a wheel-barrow, but runs on long rollers and not on wheels, because wheels are likely to stick in the soft ground. It may be pulled by horses if the bog is fairly dry, but as a rule donkeys are used because they are lighter.

When two or three dozen sods have been loaded on the sledge they are taken away and spread out to dry. After about a week they are piled in heaps, each large enough to form one good load for a horse. The wind blows through and round the pile and helps in the drying.

The people of the bog lands are as poor as the crofters of Scotland. Their homes are low, white-washed cottages thatched with straw. Very often there is no chimney, and the blue peat smoke



Photo]

[*W. A. Green, Antrim*

THE LIVING ROOM IN AN IRISH COTTAGE



Photo]

[*W. A. Green, Antrim*

AN IRISH COTTAGE : NOTICE THE STACK OF PEAT ON THE RIGHT

escapes through a hole in the corner or stays inside and stains the rafters black. The door is cut in half so that the top part can be opened to let in the air and let out the smoke, while the bottom part can be closed to keep in the baby and keep out the pig.

The inside is rather bare. Against the wall farthest from the door is a wide, open hearth with a fire of peat on the floor. Over it are hooks from which hang a coal-black pot and a kettle. There may be a wooden bed in one corner of the room, one or two stools or chairs, a bench against the wall, a spinning-wheel, a table and a few boxes and little else.

EXERCISES

1. What is :—an oast house, a creamery, a bog? Give the page where you found the answer.
2. Tell what you can see in the pictures on page 55.
3. Where are :—Yarmouth, Scilly Isles, Tipperary?

CHAPTER 10

CORNISH MINES AND MINERS

IN the south-west of England, in Cornwall, there are a number of mines from which tin has been obtained for hundreds of years. They are not as important now as they once were, but they are worth a place in this little book, for it is said that tin from Cornwall was sent to other lands in Europe a thousand years before the birth of Christ.

The tin mines are very wet places, and great pumps are at work day and night, all the year round, to prevent them filling with water. They are also very hot. Because the mines are so wet and dirty, the men change all their clothes before they go underground. When they come to the top again they wash and change back into their usual clothes. They never go to and from their work with dirty hands, faces and clothes, as many coal-miners have to do in some parts of England.

While at work they wear boots shod with iron and old, red-stained, ragged shirts and trousers. Their hats are very much like the tin helmets worn by soldiers during the Great War. These hats, being hard, guard the men's heads when they



Photo]

[Bennetts, Camborne

MINERS HAVING LUNCH : NOTICE THE CANDLES IN THEIR HATS

strike them against the rocks or when stones fall on them, as is often the case. In front of each hat, by means of a piece of sticky clay, a candle is fastened to give light. This leaves the hands free for climbing ladders or swarming up chains to reach the working place.

The miner's work is almost nothing else but boring little holes into the rock, putting an explosive in the hole and firing it to break up the rock.

The men sometimes live a long way from the



[Photo]

[Bennet's, Camborne]

MINERS AT WORK WITH ROCK DRILLS

mine and think nothing of walking four miles each way. In winter-time, or when they are working during the night, they carry a lantern to guide them across the wild and lonely moors.

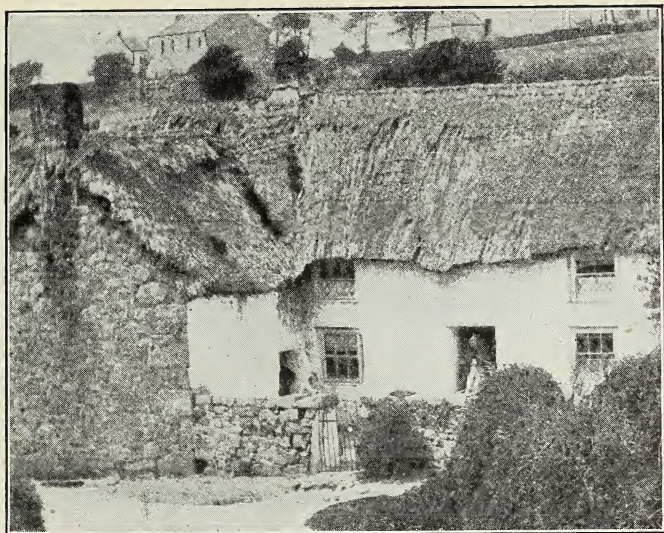
The miner's favourite food is the famous Cornish *pasty*. It is made of potatoes, onions, turnips and a little sliced meat baked altogether in a jacket of pastry. It is a very handy thing to carry to work. The men are also fond of fish and potatoes, and they drink strong black tea with almost every meal.

Many of the miners are very industrious, and

work, in their spare time, on a little farm. If they have a cow or two, they can get their own milk and their own butter. On Sunday, perhaps, they will be able to enjoy a dish of clotted or "Devonshire" cream. This is made by scalding the milk over the fire.

In some places the miners share a boat and go fishing, and most of them are ready to lend a hand to the farmers in the busy harvest season. The old miners could do almost anything from making their own shoes to building a cottage. They lived in out-of-the-way places, miles away from any big town, and if anything had to be done they had to do it themselves.

The favourite sport of the miners used to be wrestling, and on certain days of the year they would gather together, and still gather together, in great numbers to wrestle or watch others so enjoying themselves. In these days, however, the younger men seem to be more fond of football, but their games are sometimes very rough, and the referee may find it hard to stop a free fight. As a rule, however, the miners are friendly, well-behaved and very polite to strangers. When they meet anyone on the road they greet him with a "good-day" as if they had known him all their lives.

*Photo]*

A MINER'S COTTAGE

[Bennetts, Camborne

They are great travellers, and many of them have been round the world several times. When there is no work at home they pack up their bags and go to look for work in some other part of the world. As some one once said, "Wherever a hole is sunk into the earth in any part of the globe you will be sure to find a Cornish miner at the bottom of it looking for minerals."

CHAPTER 11

IN A WELSH SLATE QUARRY

THOUGH some houses may have their roofs covered with tiles, far more are roofed with slate, and most of this slate comes from North Wales.

North Wales is a land of high mountain ranges, tumbling streams and green valleys. The mountain slopes are often so steep and stony that even the fine grass refuses to cover the bare grey rocks. In some of the small valleys which lie in the mountains near Snowdon there are great ugly holes that have been carved out of the mountain sides. Near them huge piles of loose rock cover the ground. These piles are flat-topped and bluish-grey or mauve in colour.

The great hole that has spoiled the shape of the mountain side is a slate quarry, and the huge piles are the bits of broken slate which have been cast aside as useless ever since the quarry was opened. The piles grow very quickly, for eleven tons of waste are brought to the surface with every ton of slate.

The sides of the quarry rise in steps, one above



Photo]

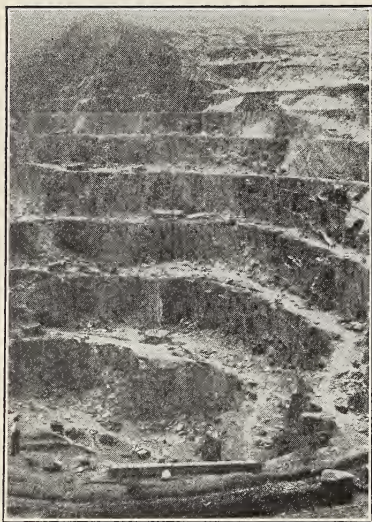
[Valentine

A VIEW IN NORTH WALES : NOTICE THE QUARRY IN THE HILLSIDE ON THE RIGHT, AND THE LAKE AND HILLS IN THE DISTANCE

the other. Each step is sixty or seventy feet above the one below, and from twenty to thirty feet wide. The steps are called galleries, and are named after the members of the owner's family or from something that happened while the gallery was being made. Each step has sloping roads that lead to the next one both above and below. Along these roads small trucks run on a kind of tram-line.

The work of getting the slate from the face of the quarry is done by the *rockmen*, as they are called. They work in pairs and are paid not by the hour, but by the amount of slate they bring out of the quarry.

They bore long, narrow holes into the side or

*Photo]**[Will F. Taylor*

A SLATE QUARRY: NOTICE THE LITTLE
SHELTERS ON THE GALLERIES

floor of the gallery, put gunpowder into the holes, fire the gunpowder and so loosen the block of slate required.

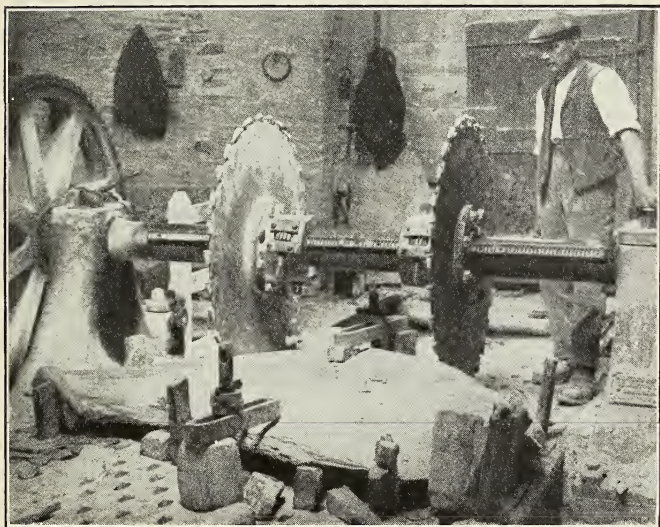
About once an hour, from nine in the morning till five in the afternoon, a bugle tells the rock-men to light the fuses that fire the powder. Then the men throw down their tools and hurry to little shelters which are dotted about the galleries.

These shelters are built of big rough slabs of slate and roofed with thick logs of very hard wood, on top of which are more heavy slates. For a few minutes the air is filled with the noise of the explosion, the crash of falling rocks and perhaps the dull splash of a great heap that has gone toppling into a lake.

Then comes another call, and the men go back once more to work. The large blocks are split into

smaller ones by means of chisels. The useful pieces are packed on trucks and hauled away to the dressing-sheds: these are long, one-storied buildings, built of slate, with a gangway down the centre. The space on either side of the gangway is divided up into compartments in which the slates are split and trimmed.

The quarrymen live, as a rule, in small towns or villages in closely packed rows of stone cottages



Photo]

[Will F. Taylor

SAWING A ROUGH SLAB OF SLATE

with slate roofs. Some of them own small farms, and at times stay away from the quarry to look after their harvest and their hay. On the whole, however, they live as near as possible to the quarry, but sometimes special early trains are run on private lines to collect workers from nearby towns.

The men are fond of football, and during the lunch hour may be seen playing on the galleries or on the clear spaces outside the dressing-shed. The owners of the quarries often offer a cup to be played for by the different galleries and everybody gets very excited. As the day for the final draws near many are the battles of words that take place between the galleries about the teams. At lunch-hour the quarry hums not with the noise of work, but with the voices of hundreds of men talking about football. And they are talking, not in English, but in their own native Welsh.

EXERCISES

1. Where are the following found :—tin, peat, slate ? Give the page on which you found the answer.
2. Why do the Welsh quarrymen go into little shelters about once an hour ?

CHAPTER 12

COLLIERS OF SOUTH WALES

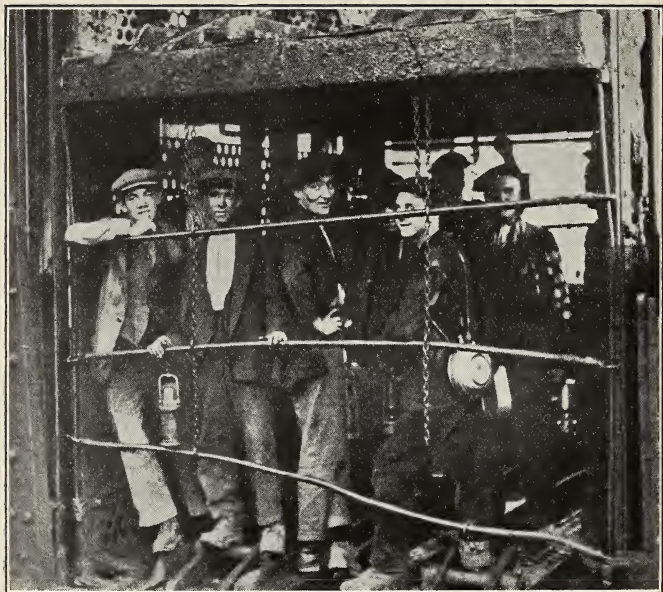
IN the south of Wales lies one of the largest and most important of all the coalfields in Britain. It is cut up into a number of separate pieces by deep valleys each shaped like a V. The bottom of such a valley is so narrow that there is only just room for the river and the railway.

A little higher up is a narrow road with long rows of brick or stone houses, the homes of the miners. In some places the villages join each other, so that one crooked string of houses winds its way along the sides of the hills for some distance.

Higher still are bare hills where a few shepherds and a few farmers live in tiny villages of old stone cottages with a church in the middle.

Looking down into the valley, whose air is full of gas and coal dust, one sees only smoke, heaps of rubbish, grimy buildings and a few stunted trees.

The coal lies below the ground in layers or seams, with other kinds of rocks above and below, something like the meat between two pieces of bread in a sandwich. To reach the seams, holes or *shafts*, which look like wells, are dug deep into the



Photo]

MINERS IN A CAGE

[Topical Press

earth and the miner goes down these in a *cage*, a kind of big iron box, hung from the end of a steel-wire rope.

At the bottom of the shaft is an underground room, with brick walls. The walls are white-washed and the room is lit with electricity. From it tunnels, or *galleries*, lead to the seams. As these near the place where work is going on they often

*Photo]**[Topical Press*

A MINER AT WORK AT THE COAL FACE : NOTICE THE LAMPS ON THE
LEFT OF THE PICTURE

become low and narrow, and the men must stoop to pass through them.

In thick seams the miner may be able to stand up straight ; in a seam about three feet thick he can sit but not stand ; and in a very thin seam he may have to work lying on his side. As he is paid by the ton and not by the hour, he is paid more for a ton of coal when he is working at a thin seam than when he is working at a thick one.

With his pick, or with the help of coal-cutting machinery, or, perhaps, by blasting, he removes the coal in big lumps from the face of the seam. These lumps are then put into little wagons, or *tubs*, and drawn along railway lines by machinery or by pit ponies to the bottom of the shaft.

The ponies must be small in order to be able to pass where the galleries are low and narrow. They live most of their lives in the pits in large, clean, warm stables. In these stables each pony has his own stall with his name chalked up over it. When at work they wear a strong shield of leather on the head to keep them from hurting themselves, for they open doors, here and there, by butting at them with their heads.

The life of the miner is hard and dangerous. Sometimes water enters the mine with a rush, fills a gallery and drowns all the men in it. At times the roof falls in and crushes them.

Gases may take fire and cause explosions and the miner be burned to death. To prevent explosions, as far as possible, the miner may not carry candles, open lamps or matches and must not smoke. He is given a special kind of lamp which is safe to use even where there is gas. These lamps are lighted before the men go down the shaft, and they are

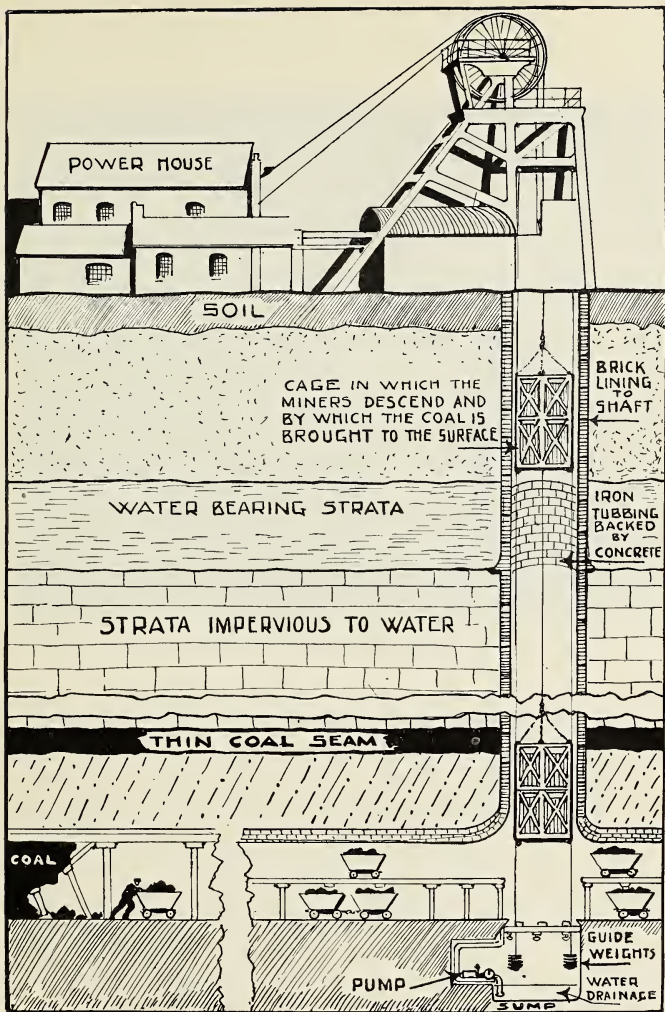
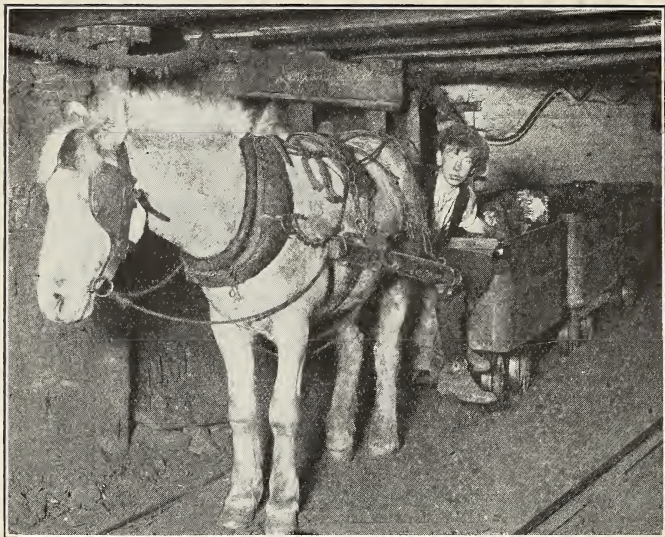


DIAGRAM OF A COAL MINE



Photo]

[Central Press

A PIT PONY DRAWING TUBS OF COAL

locked in such a way that they cannot be opened except in the lamp room.

Mining coal is dirty work, and when the miner comes up to the top again he is as black as a chimney-sweep, his clothes are full of dust and his body is sticky with perspiration. Therefore he has to have a bath every day of his working life, and so, though his work is dirty, he is one of the cleanest men in the world.

CHAPTER 13

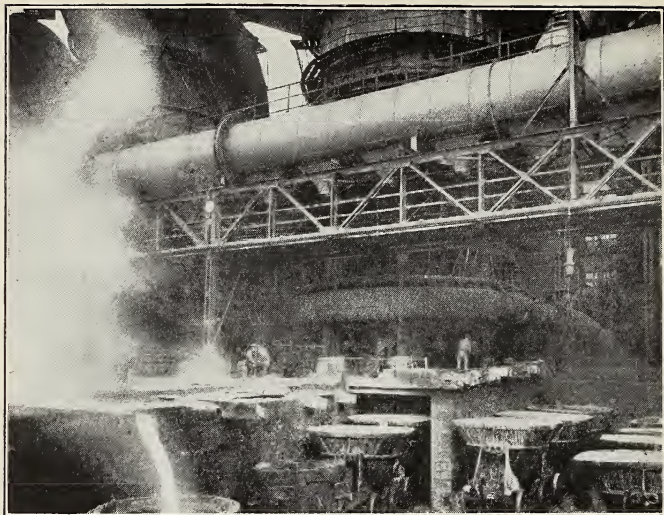
CHAIN MAKERS OF THE BLACK COUNTRY

IN the centre of England, mostly to the west of Birmingham, is a district where much coal is mined and many things are made out of iron. It is called the Black Country. It is really no blacker than any other place where there are furnaces, factories and mills, but it is black enough to deserve the name that is given to it.

Here and there are heaps of rubbish that have been tipped out from the iron works and coal mines. The grass, where there is any, is not bright and fresh, but looks as if it needed washing. Smoke, black or dirty yellow, darkens the sky by day ; the glow of furnaces reddens it at night.

So much smoke means that there are a great many factories. The things made in these factories are, as we have said, chiefly of iron, though other metals are also in use.

The iron is obtained from iron ore. The ore is heated in a big furnace till it melts. It is then run out into moulds, where it takes the form of short bars called pigs. Now pig iron is not very pure and it is also brittle. Before it can be used for

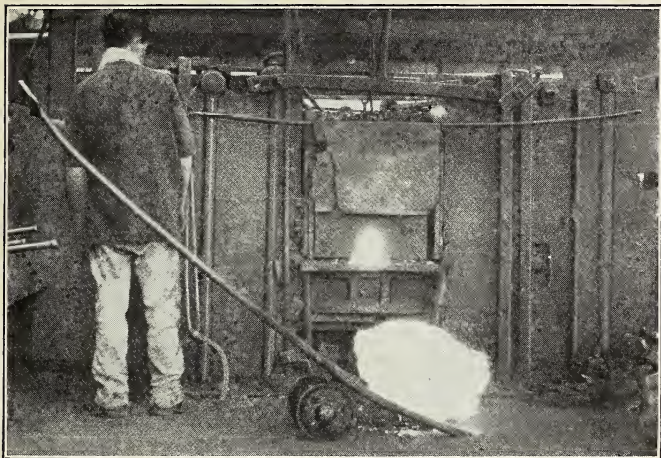
*Photo]*

BLAST FURNACES AT WORK

[The Times

things like chains it has to be “puddled.” Lumps of pig iron are put on the floor of a furnace. On one side is a fire that gives a very hot flame. This flame passes over the pig and softens it.

When it is soft enough a man pushes a long rod through a hole in the furnace wall. With this he turns and pushes the white-hot mass about and works it up into big balls. The puddler’s work is hard and hot, and he needs a lot of water, tea or something else to quench his thirst.



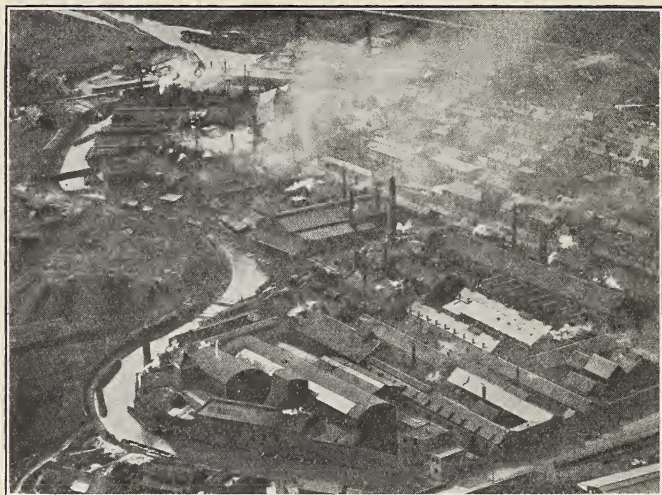
Photo]

[Courtesy, Messrs. N. Hingley

A PUDDLED BALL OF IRON TAKEN FROM THE FURNACE

The hot balls of iron are fished out of the furnace with long tongs and taken to the steam hammer. This hammer weighs several tons, and as it strikes the glowing ball sparks fly about in all directions. The man who turns the ball round, first this way and then that, under the hammer, is hit by red-hot bits of iron. To protect himself he has a helmet with goggles on his head, sheaths of iron on his legs, and wears clothes made of leather.

The iron is next rolled, by machinery, into long bars that come out from between the rollers,



Photo]

[Geographia

AN AERIAL VIEW OF FACTORIES IN THE BLACK COUNTRY

wriggling over the black earth floor like so many yards of red-hot worms. When the bars are cool they are ready for the chain-maker. They are of different thicknesses, suitable either for quite small chains or for the great cables by which the anchors of giant steamships are raised or lowered.

In the picture opposite is a group of men making ships' cable. They do most of their work by hand. A piece of iron, the right length for the link, is picked up by hand, put in a small furnace to

be made red hot, taken out by hand, and then bent by a machine. The two open ends are hammered together by heavy hammers that are worked by hand.

In the picture the man on the left has his hammer over his shoulder; the one near the middle has his raised; another on the right has his on the link on the anvil. One after the other each man raises his heavy hammer, swings it high and strikes the link. The strokes are as regular as the ticks of a clock. After another heating and another hammering the link is finished. It is then hauled up a little



Photo]

[Courtesy, Messrs. N. Hingley

FORGING AN ANCHOR CHAIN

way in order to allow the next link to be passed through it and closed.

The men who make these heavy chains begin work at five in the morning and leave off at about ten. They then go home to dig in their gardens, take their dogs for a walk, race whippets, fly pigeons, or, perhaps, play football. They are very well paid, and many of them go to and from their work in their own motor-cars.

Most of the workers' homes in the Black Country are very ugly places. They are just brick boxes with slate lids on them, and the bricks are often blue and look very cold. Even when they are red they seldom have that nice cosy look we so often see in the brick cottages near farms. And, sometimes, to keep the rain from soaking into the bricks, the sides of the houses facing west, where most of the rain comes from, are painted black, as if the country were not black enough already.

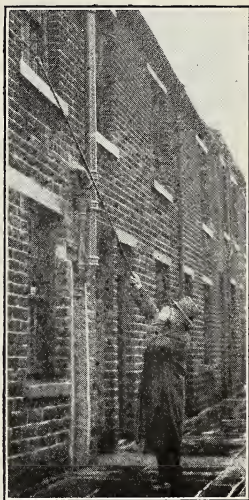
EXERCISES

1. What is found in :—North Wales, South Wales, the Black Country? Give the chapter in which the answer is found.
2. Where are Lowestoft, St. Mary's, Limerick, Birmingham?

CHAPTER 14

COTTON WORKERS OF LANCASHIRE

VERY early in the morning, through the dull grey streets of almost any Lancashire cotton town, goes the "knocker-up." He carries a long pole to the end of which is fastened a bunch of wires. With this he taps on the bedroom windows to rouse the people who are asleep, and he does not go away again until some one rises and answers the call. He is paid for his trouble a few pence each week by each of those whom he wakens.



Photo]

[Commercial Graphic Co.

THE "KNOCKER-UP"

Soon the noise of hurrying feet is heard as thousands of men and women make their way over the stones with which the streets are paved. They are going to the mills, tall grey buildings, with hundreds of windows, whose giant chimney-stacks are pouring clouds of smoke into the air.

In some towns the mills spin raw cotton into

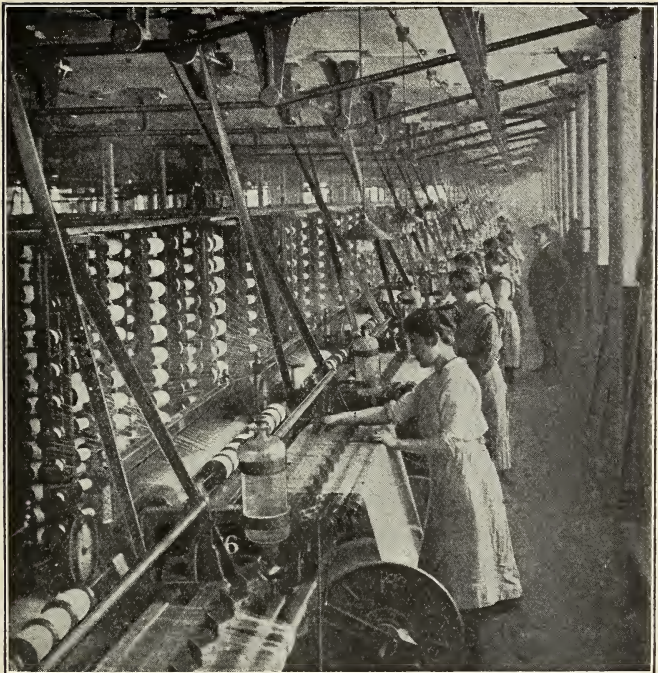


Photo]

[Will F. Taylor

MILL HANDS ON THEIR WAY TO THE MILLS

threads : in other towns the mills weave the threads into cloth : in a few cases there are spinning and weaving mills in the same town. In all the mills there is a great deal of machinery and a great deal of noise. It is, in fact, so hard to hear what anyone says that the workers soon learn to lip-read, that is, to understand what a person is saying by looking at the lips of the speaker rather than by listening with their own ears. In this way it is possible to talk without shouting.



Photo]

[Will F. Taylor

INSIDE A COTTON MILL

At meal-times the hooters moan and shriek to send the people home to tea or dinner. The favourite dishes are tripe and fish and chips.

The Lancashire cotton district is also noted for two kinds of cakes—simnel cakes and parkin. Parkin is made from oatmeal and treacle, and is specially

eaten round the bonfires on the Fifth of November, though it is often on the table at other times. It may be added here that the cotton worker likes to drink his tea out of a pint mug and not out of a tea-cup.

The people of Lancashire are hard workers. The married women, after a long day in the mills, find time to keep their houses spotlessly clean and to make them real, cosy homes. They wash the outside walls with a mop and a pail, and scour the stone window-sills and doorsteps with a kind of bath-brick called a "donkey stone." When the stonework is dry, it is, for a little while, creamy white, but it is not long before it needs washing again. The women of the cotton towns fight a battle with soot and dirt that never ends.

The chief event of the year comes some time between June and September. This is a week's holiday called "a wake." Each town has its own wake at its own time. For a whole year the people "save up for the wake," and some kind of saving club holds the money. When the holiday comes round quite a small town may have as much as £25,000 to spend. Thousands of people then go off to the seaside, where the strong sea air and the rest and many kinds of fun help to make them fit

to spend another year in their ugly, dirty, noisy, 'smelly towns.

Another event is the "scholars' walk." This takes place at Whitsuntide. The children put on their new clothes, carry banners and march behind a band to the centre of the town, where a service is held. When it is over they go back to their own part of the town for games and sports.

Lancashire people are fond of sports. Their cricket and football teams are amongst the best in England. Every town has parks where tennis, bowls and even boating may be enjoyed. They are also fond of dog racing and music, and the cotton towns are famous for their brass bands.

EXERCISES

1. What people in this book :—wear shawls, have sheaths of iron on their legs, carry candles stuck in their hats? Give the page where you found the answer.
2. What is :—a poke, peat, a pasty, a "knocker-up"? Give the page where you found the answer.

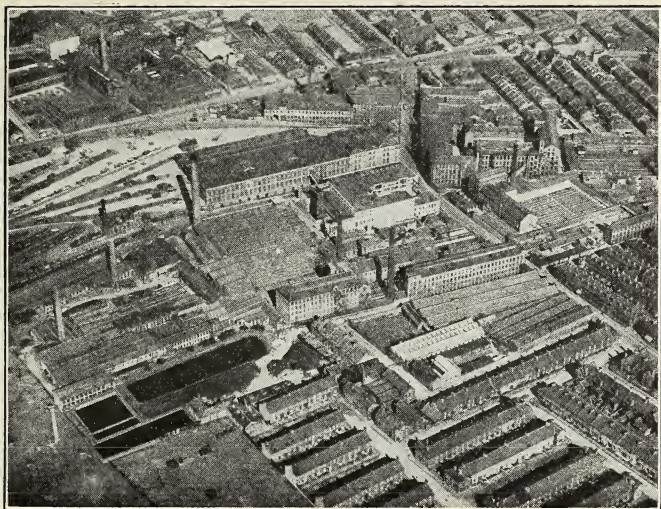
CHAPTER 15

WOOL WORKERS OF YORKSHIRE

THE woollen towns of Yorkshire are just as ugly as the cotton towns of Lancashire. There are the same narrow streets paved with bricks or cobbles, with the houses standing back to back in rows that look like barracks. There are the same tall chimneys staining the sky with dirty smoke. The "knocker-up" goes on the same errand every week-day morning, and soon after he has tapped on the bedroom windows comes the same kind of clackety clack of the mill-workers' clogs as they hurry off to the mills.

Some of them are going to the wool warehouse, where the sacks of raw wool are cut open and sorted. Others are going to the spinning or weaving sheds, and most of them are carrying cans filled with tea or coffee to drink while they are at work or at their meals.

When the raw wool arrives at the mills it has to be washed clean. It is passed through bowl after bowl of very hot water. The room in which this work is done is cloudy with steam, very hot, and has the sickening sweet smell of the grease that is



Photo]

[Aerofilms

AN AERIAL VIEW OF WOOLLEN MILLS IN BRADFORD

washed out of the wool. There are pools of soapy water on the stone-flagged floor, and the men go to and fro in clogs that are shod with iron. When the wool leaves the last bowl it is quite clean and is carried on a running belt into a huge oven, from which, at last, it comes out snow-white and bone-dry.

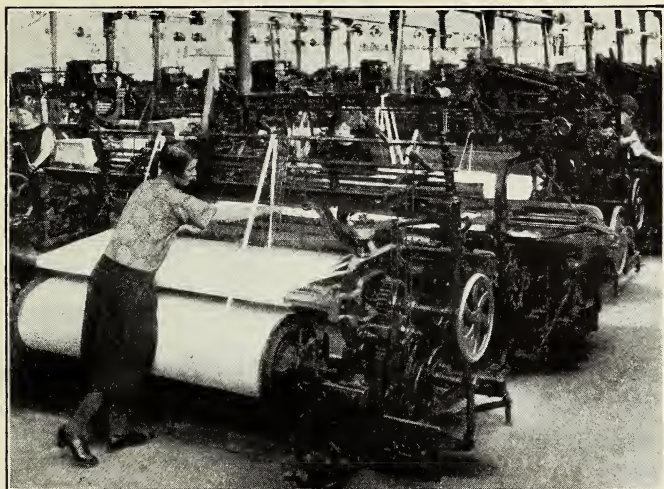
It is then treated by machines that comb it out straight and prepare it for the spinners, who spin it into strong, thin threads, after which it goes to

*Photo]**[Commercial Graphic Co., Bradford*

A WOOL COMBING ROOM, WHERE MACHINES COMB THE WOOL INTO
THREADS, READY FOR WEAVING

the weavers, who make it into cloth. In the Lancashire cotton mills most of the spinners are men : in a Yorkshire woollen mill they are mostly women and girls.

The noisiest place in the mill is the weaving shed. In some of these sheds the looms are so close together that it is difficult to pass between the machines without having one's clothes caught in the wheels. Here too scores of girls are at work,



Photo]

[Commercial Graphic Co., Bradford

THE WEAVING SHED, WHERE THE WOOLLEN THREADS ARE WOVEN
INTO CLOTH

each of whom can weave, on one loom, four miles of cloth in a year. Most of them wear, as in the other parts of the mill, short skirts and thin cotton blouses. To and from their work they go bare-headed unless the weather is cold and wet, when they cover their hair with their shawls.

The Yorkshire people are great eaters. Their chief meals are breakfast, dinner and high tea. High tea is taken about half-past six in the evening, and may include ham and eggs, fried fish or a slice

off the joint, piles of bread and butter, tea cakes, scones, jam, fancy cakes and huge quantities of tea.

It is still the custom for Yorkshire wives to bake their own bread, tea cakes and scones every Friday. Oatcake is bought in a moist state, but is made dry and crisp by hanging it on a string in front of the kitchen fire. Other favourite dishes are tripe and onions, black pudding and Yorkshire pudding. The Yorkshire pudding is light and crisp, not like the soggy yellow lump of dough so often called Yorkshire pudding in other parts of the country. It is often eaten *before*, not *with*, the beef, and is served with rich gravy and sugar. Then there are apple tarts, eaten with cheese, spice cakes and parkin. And we must not forget the bloater, sometimes called the "wool comber's beef—forty ribs to t' inch."

The workers must be glad to get some of these good things to eat when the evening comes and the hooter yells out that it is time to go home. Men and women, boys and girls, then troop out of the mill in a wide stream, pour through the gates into the streets, fill the pavements, tram cars and buses, and make their way back to the long rows of little houses and the streets, that, during their absence, have been so empty and quiet.

Their houses may be small and their hours of work long, but the wool-workers are, usually, a very merry crowd, fond of games, sports and music, and they toil, day by day, without grumbling either at the noise or the stuffiness of the mills.

EXERCISES

1. What are the women doing in the pictures on pages 80, 81, and 87?
2. Make a list of all the kinds of food said to be eaten by the wool workers of Yorkshire.
3. Make a list of the favourite amusements of Cornish tin-miners, Fen farmers, Welsh quarrymen, chain makers of the Black Country, Lancashire cotton-workers, Yorkshire wool-workers.
4. From your dictionary find the meaning of:—blast furnace, cobbles, hooter, pavement.

CHAPTER 16

LINEN WORKERS OF IRELAND

ANOTHER important kind of cloth is linen, which is made from the fibres of the flax plant. The chief home of this industry in the British Isles is Ulster, in the north-east of Ireland.

The flax seed is sown, in the month of April, on level ground if possible. The seeds are planted very close to each other in order that the stems shall be thin when they grow up, and the fields are carefully weeded by hand as soon as the young plants begin to show above the ground.

The flax plant has a very slender green stem that grows from two to three feet high and bears small narrow leaves and very pretty light blue flowers. It is ready to harvest about the end of July or the beginning of August, when the leaves of the flowers have fallen, the seed pods have turned brown and the stem has turned yellow. The stems are not cut, but are pulled up by the roots a handful at a time, tied in bundles and left on the field to dry. While they are drying they give off a very strong, unpleasant smell.

A bundle of plants consists of seeds, leaves and stems. The seeds and leaves are not wanted, so they are pulled off by passing them through a big



Photo]

[W. A. Green, Antrim

PULLING FLAX AND BINDING IT INTO BUNDLES

machine with long teeth. The stems which are left have a hard woody core inside, a thin skin outside and a layer of fibres in between. Round each fibre is a kind of gum. Before any linen can be made, the core, the skin and the gum must be got rid of. The fibres only are needed.

Bundles of flax are placed upright, with the roots down, in pits that have been dug in the fields and are filled with water. Weights are placed on the tops of the plants in order to keep them under the water. After about two weeks the soft parts have rotted away, some of the gum has dissolved and the fibres have become loose. The stalks are then either dried in bundles or spread out on the grass.



Photo]

[W. A. Green, Antrim

PLACING THE FLAX IN WATER TO ROT THE SOFT PARTS

The flax is next passed between heavy rollers to break up the core and the soft silky fibres are combed out by hand. Soon the fibre is ready for the mill, where it will be spun into threads and the threads woven into cloth.

In spinning flax, the thread has to be drawn through hot water to soften the gum in it and to make it possible to stretch it still more. The rooms in which this work is done are, therefore, very warm and the workers wear as little clothing as possible. The men take off their boots and stockings and may wear nothing but a shirt open at the neck and an old pair of flannel trousers. The

women and girls have overalls and blouses of the very brightest colours, and carry the tools they use in their work hung on a cord tied round the waist.

The flax fibre is brown in colour and the linen made from it is not white, as we see it in tablecloths and pillow-cases, but brown like the fibre itself. To make it white it must be bleached. It is boiled with lime, soaked in weak acid, boiled again and then spread out on the wide lawns that belong to the mill. Here the sun and the wind do their part in helping to remove the brown colour, and then the linen goes back indoors again for more baths of other kinds. It at last leaves the mill as a lorry-load of white towels, handkerchiefs and sheets.



Photo]

[W. A. Green, Antrim

LINEN SPREAD OUT ON THE GRASS TO BLEACH

CHAPTER 17

IN THE POTTERIES

IN the north of Staffordshire there is a district called the Potteries. Here more cups and saucers, jugs and plates are made than in any other part of the world. Almost one person out of every six is employed in this kind of work. The towns, in some ways, are like other factory towns. In busy times fires burn all day and all night and clouds of smoke hang over the place, making everything dirty and grim. It is said that a woman has to change the window curtains at least once a fortnight if she wishes to be thought a clean and tidy person.

There are, however, some differences between the pottery towns and those to be found elsewhere. Lining the sides of some of the streets are buildings, two or three storeys high, known as *pot banks*. Rising high above them are a lot of things that look like bottles. These are the kilns or ovens in which the cups and saucers are baked. Taller than these are the chimneys, of which there are hundreds, for every pottery has at least three.

In the morning when the steam whistle calls the people to begin work at seven or eight o'clock the



Photo]

[Aerofilms

AN AERIAL VIEW IN THE POTTERIES

streets are filled with crowds of men and women, boys and girls, who look much like work-people in other factory towns. But at midday or again at half-past five or six in the evening, when the same whistle stops the work, they look like no other workers talked about in this book. Their faces and clothes, instead of being black, are white. The whiteness is clay, which finds its way on to the clothes, even though overalls are worn to keep them clean.

There was a time when people used very little earthenware. On the tables were mugs made of metal and plates made of wood. We still use a wooden bread board for a loaf, but most of the other things are now of clay or of clay mixed with ground flints or sand.

The white clay for the best china and the flints are brought to the Potteries in large quantities by rail or canal, and in many places along the banks

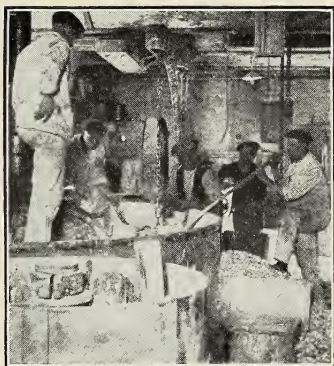


Photo]

[The Times

KILNS IN A POTTERY WORKS AT HANLEY: NOTICE THE WORKMEN
STANDING IN THE GLARE FROM THE OPEN KILN

of the canal there are mills where the flints are ground and mixed with water to the thickness of cream. It is a common sight in these towns to see large wag-gons loaded either with grey or white clay which is being taken to the factories, and still stranger are the barrel carts that carry the white liquid that contains the ground flint.



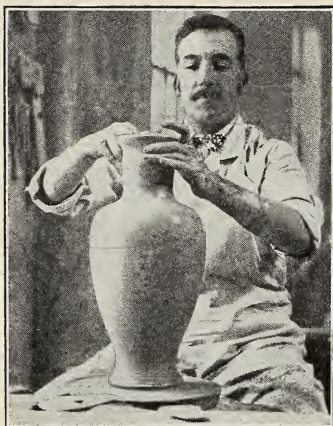
Photo]

[Courtesy Messrs. Mintons

FLINTS BEING GROUND BY MACHINERY, IN ROUND PANS LINED WITH STONE: AFTER GRINDING, THE FLINTS ARE MIXED TOGETHER WITH WATER

The work of shaping the paste of which a cup, jug, or basin is made was at one time done by hand by means of a potter's wheel. The wheel was a flat, round plate which revolved very rapidly. On it the potter put the paste, and made the cup with his fingers and a few very simple tools as the clay spun round and round.

At the present time the wheel is not so much used, and much of the pottery is made in moulds. The handles of cups and jugs are made separately and fixed on afterwards. The next thing to do is



Photo]

[Courtesy, Messrs. Doullon

A POTTER AT HIS WHEEL, SHAPING
A VASE

to bake the clay to make it hard. Twenty or more jugs, for example, are placed in an oval box made of baked yellow clay. These boxes are carried to one of the bottle-shaped ovens seen in the picture on page 96, and built up in piles.

The ovens are stoked, or *fired*, during the week-ends. The baking of the ware takes from Friday evening until

Sunday evening, and during that time as much as twenty tons of coal are used. This amount of coal, which is burnt in two days in one kiln, would last in the fires of an ordinary house for two years. During the week-end, the firemen are at work day and night, keeping a careful watch on the ovens.

When taken from the oven the pottery is known as biscuit, and, like biscuits, will soak up water. If a pattern is to be put on it, now is the time. This may be painted on or it may be transferred from

thin printed paper, just in the same way that we make transfers.

The ware is next taken to the dipping house, where it is dipped into a large tub full of white liquid and then set aside to dry. The white liquid is called *glaze*—that is, *glass*. When the vessel is afterwards heated in another kiln for twenty-four hours the glaze runs all over it, giving it a shining surface, and preventing the pattern from being rubbed off.



Photo]

PAINTING ON THE PATTERN

[Daily Herald

After the jugs and basins are glazed they are taken to the warehouse, sorted out, and packed with straw in wooden crates ready to be sent to some other town to be sold.

In a factory as many as twelve hundred people may be employed—men and women, boys and girls. There is work for many kinds of people, for the artists who make or paint the patterns, for those who shape the clay upon the wheel or in the moulds, for those who stoke the fires, for women who do the lighter work, and for the men who make pots too heavy and too large for women to handle.

Much of the work is not easy, because many of the workshops are kept very warm in order to help the ware to dry, while in the other rooms where the patterns are printed or painted the air is heavy with the smell of turpentine and oil.

In the factory the potter works hard: outside he plays. He is fond of music, and on almost any night in a pottery town you would hear the sound of singing or of a band practising. Football is a favourite game, and more than one well-known team carries the name of a pottery town.

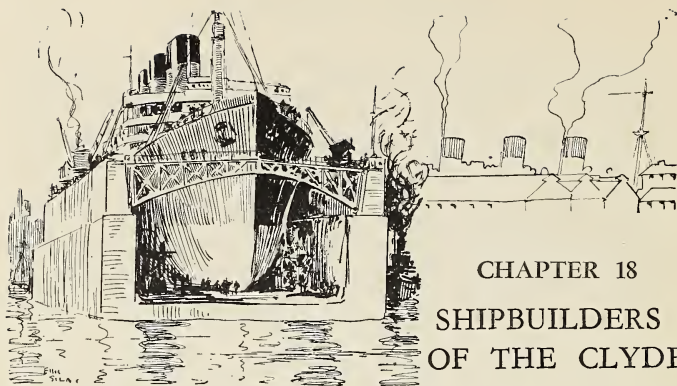
At the beginning of August is the holiday known as the wakes, when the potter and his family take

their chief rest of the year in a holiday by the sea or at one or other of the many beautiful places that lie so closely to this grimy district.

And just as miners from Cornwall are to be found all over the world, so too are the potters of North Staffordshire, either making pottery themselves or teaching others how to make it.

EXERCISES

1. Where are the following made :—cotton goods, woollen goods, linen, earthenware, chains ?
2. Make a list from this book of places in the British Isles (*a*) where few people live, (*b*) where many people live.
3. Where are Cornwall, the Black Country, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Ulster ?
4. Explain—biscuit, crate, “scholars’ walk,” pot bank, potter’s wheel.



CHAPTER 18

SHIPBUILDERS OF THE CLYDE

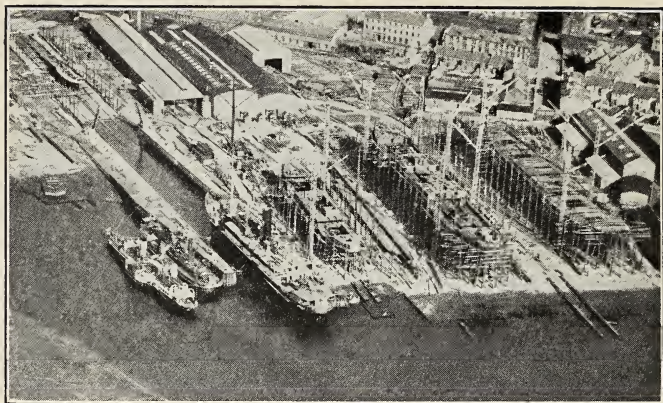
TO supply our factories with raw cotton and wool and ourselves with food, and to carry to other lands the things that are made in the factories, ships are needed. The most important shipbuilding district in the world is on the River Clyde in the west of Scotland. On this river there are twenty miles of shipbuilding yards and engineering works.

As it takes three thousand men to build the biggest ocean liners, there are thousands of men at work along these twenty busy miles. As their work is very hard and can be done only by those who are very strong, they have to be well fed. They begin the day with a good breakfast of porridge and milk, eggs and bacon, or haddocks or fresh herrings. In the middle of the day they get another big meal of Scotch broth and "mealies," skins filled with oatmeal.

They also need long holidays. They do not keep Christmas Day or Easter like most people in England, but at the New Year they take ten days' holiday and the works are closed. About the beginning of July there is another ten-day holiday, when again no one works in the shipyards.

Like most other British workmen, the shipbuilders are fond of football, but they have other sports as well. Most of the men own their own boats, and spend much of their free time rowing and sailing on the Clyde. There are many races between the different yards and even between the different sets of workmen in the same yard. The plate-layers race the boiler-makers, and so on. Bowls is also a common game, and every town has a bowling-green with a surface as smooth as velvet.

But life on the Clyde is very far from being all play. The men begin work at eight in the morning and go on till half-past five in the evening. Every worker in the yards has a number, and each yard has a big board on which are all the numbers of its workmen. When a worker arrives in the morning he hangs his number, which is on a round piece of metal, in its proper place on the board. In this way the foreman is able to tell who is at work.



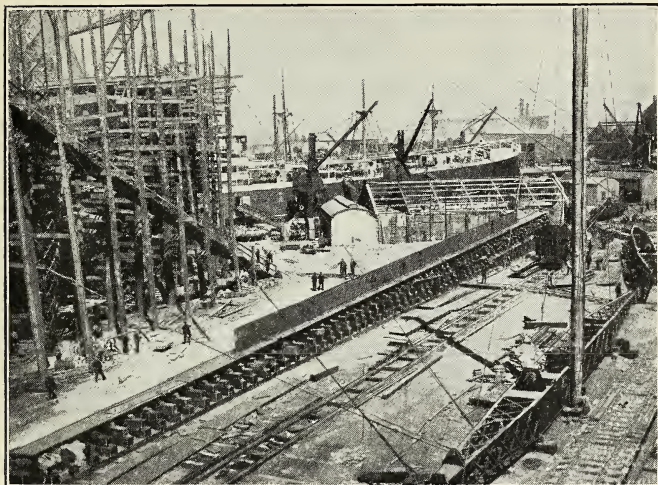
Photo]

Aerofilms

AN AERIAL VIEW OF A CLYDE SHIPYARD

In a shipyard all kinds of trades are employed. There are carpenters, platers, riveters, caulkers, drillers, blacksmiths, men who draw plans, joiners and many others. The carpenters and other woodworkers are paid by the hour; the iron-workers are paid by the work done; the men who make the drawings are paid so much a week. Hardly any women are employed, but a few are sometimes used to polish some of the woodwork with "French polish," a kind of varnish dissolved in spirit.

On the whole the men in the shipyards are not employed, day by day, through the whole of the year. Sometimes they are needed for a month's



Photo]

[Courtesy, Messrs. Cunard

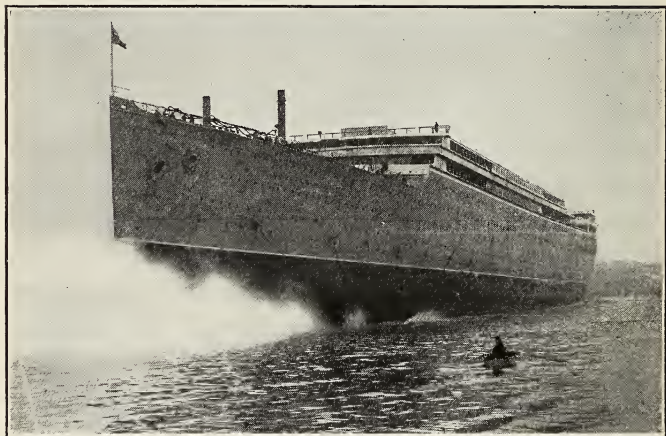
A CORNER OF A SHIPYARD: ON THE LINE OF WOODEN BLOCKS
IN THE CENTRE OF THE PICTURE LIES THE KEEL OF A SHIP

work, and when this is finished, they may not have anything to do for a long while. It takes two years to build a big liner, but only six or seven months for a tiny fishing-trawler.

The places where the ships are built are called "ways." On these rest a number of wooden blocks, and upon the blocks is laid the keel, which is the backbone of the vessel. The blocks are coated thickly with grease so that the vessel can slide easily into the water when it is launched.

On the day of the launch the wooden blocks on which the ship is resting are knocked from under her and she slides slowly into the water. She is then towed back into a dry dock, to be fitted with her engine and boilers and the rest of her machinery. She is now ready for a trial trip to see if she can go as fast as she is supposed to go. If she passes the test she is handed over to the man who ordered her.

By day or by night ships from all parts of the world come sailing up the Clyde to be cleaned, scraped, painted and mended, and so to find more and more work for the men in the shipyards.



Photo]

[Courtesy, Messrs. Cunard

THE CUNARD LINER, *AQUITANIA*, BEING LAUNCHED

CHAPTER 19

LIFE IN LONDON'S DOCKLAND

THE ships that reach and leave our shores find homes in the ports. Here in big basins, called docks, they load and unload their cargoes. Some of the docks are surrounded by high walls, above which can be seen the great funnels and masts of the ships that lie in the waters inside. The docks of London stretch for miles along the banks of the River Thames. In the land behind them, in Dockland, live many of the people who work in them.

Dockland is a queer place. It does not seem quite English. There are little eating-houses with all sorts of foreign dishes with strange names. There are Chinese dining-rooms with yellow men standing about the doorways. There are brown-faced men from India and negroes from Africa walking up and down, but they all wear European clothes. Most of them are sailors who have come with the ships, and will sail away again as soon as their ships are unloaded. They stay down in the East End of London, and are never seen by thousands of the folk who call themselves Londoners.

There are, of course, also a great many English-

men in Dockland. They try to earn their living by working in the docks. They are paid so much a day, but at times some of them may get work on no more than two or three days in a week. Their homes are dirty and almost always over-crowded. They are too poor to rent more than perhaps two rooms, and in these two rooms the whole family must eat, live and sleep.

One of the best paid of the dock-workers is the *stevedore*. He is the man who looks after the loading and unloading of the boat at the dockside. It is he who sees that the cargo is properly stowed away in the hold. If it is not evenly placed, so that the ship stands up straight in the water, the vessel may sink in the first storm it meets in the open sea. Other men, called dockers and warehousemen, receive the cargo on the quay and stock it in the warehouses.

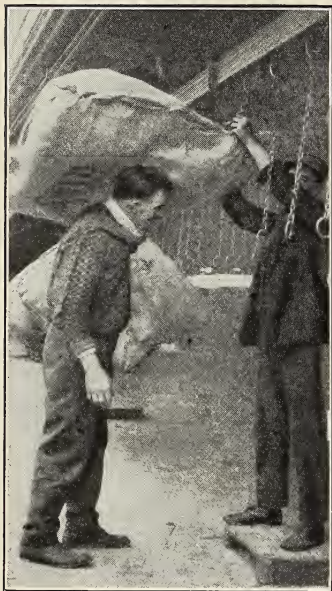
In every dockyard there are wide roads, a network of railway lines and huge warehouses. Some of the cargo is put direct from the ship into railway trucks or heavy motor lorries by means of great cranes and not by hand. There are different kinds of cranes for coal, ores, chilled meat and fruit. Grain is sucked up out of the holds of ships through tubes that are called "elephant's trunks."

*Photo]**[Courtesy, Port of London Authority*

A SHIP'S CARGO OF ORANGES BEING UNLOADED

Dockland wakes very early in the day. Long before eight o'clock the little eating-houses, coffee-shops and public-houses are opened, for work begins at eight.

Although a great deal of machinery is used men are still often employed to carry heavy weights. Some of the dock porters must be amongst the strongest men in the world. Just as one kind of crane lifts coal and another lifts fruit, so the dock porter never carries more than one kind of goods. A meat porter carries only the great sides of meat



Photo]

[A. J. Linney

A MEAT PORTER

that come from Argentina and the colonies ; a deal porter carries nothing but timber.

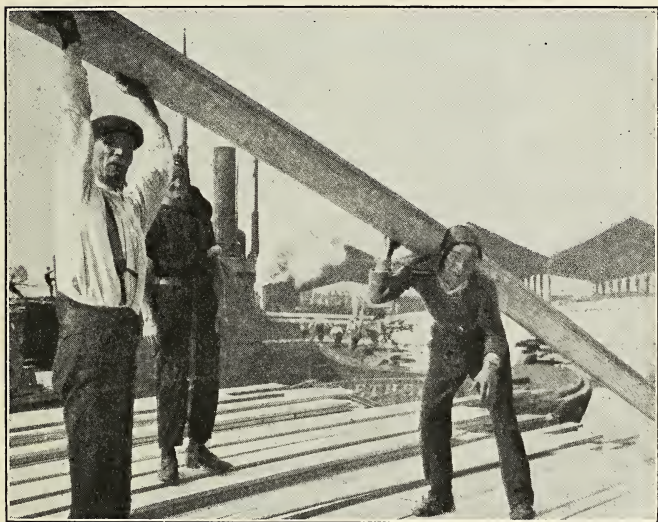
These porters need skill and courage as well as strength. Take the timber porter as an example. He wears on his head a close-fitting leather cap with a long pad at the back. He slips his head under a great plank that may be fourteen feet long and weigh over two hundredweight. He takes this over to the timber stack, which may

be quite a distance away, and here, as soon as the stack grows tall, the most difficult part of his work begins.

High up, some planks are left sticking out over the side of the stack. Others are placed, sloping from these to the ground. Up these sloping planks he has to walk. He must know, to an inch, how

much the plank will bend under his weight, and must take great care of his balance and where he puts his feet. If he makes a mistake he is likely to fall and hurt himself.

After an hour off for lunch, work begins again. During the afternoon there is a short stop for tea. One man in each gang is sent off by his mates to fetch the tea from some near-by eating-house. While he is gone the others do his work as well as their own. At five o'clock the whistle blows.



Photo]

A TIMBER PORTER AT WORK

[A. J. Linney

Work is over and the noisy cranes are still. Very soon little is heard except the hooting of the sirens on the river and the whistling and the clatter of the waggons on the railway. The night-watchmen and the policemen are left in charge and the labourers return home. Many go to new houses that have been built for them near the country, but many still find a resting-place amongst Chinese, Hindus, negroes and other coloured people of whom there are so many in London's Dockland.

EXERCISES

1. Look in your poetry books and see if you can find any verses or lines that describe any of the places or workers mentioned in this book.
2. Write a description of the place where you live.
3. Give an account of your father's work.
4. What other kinds of work are carried on where you live?

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THE KINGSWAY GEOGRAPHY
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